

# The Listener

Published every Thursday by the British Broadcasting Corporation



'Large Interior in Red', by Matisse, now on view at Burlington House, London: see Patrick Heron on 'The Changing Jug' (page 135)

In this number:

Phyllis Bentley, Peter Fleming, H. V. Hodson



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# The Listener

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## Racial Problems in the Commonwealth

By H. V. HODSON

THE idea of race, so simple and obvious to the ordinary man, is in fact one of the most elusive and confused in all contemporary affairs. In itself, it is hard to define with any scientific exactness; more baffling still is its cat's-cradle entanglement with other phenomena, like nationalism, imperialism and economic class.

One day, race may turn out to be an even greater problem than communism. At present it threatens chiefly because of its connection with other political and economic relationships, including the conflict between communism and democracy. In the struggle in the Far East, for instance, the motive of racial consciousness in Asia, of seeking to 'turn out the white man', undoubtedly plays its part. But can we be sure that even this motive is strictly racial; that the white man is to be evicted because he is of different race? Or is it because he represents a certain relationship of economic or political domination, which Asian nationalism (as distinct from race-consciousness) is determined to end? A famous British-Indian administrator said to me the other day: 'In my experience there was no race problem in India under our rule'. You may think that an exaggeration, but you see what he meant. It was not because the British were white and the Indians were brown that there was sometimes tension between them, but because politically the British were, in the last resort, the masters. When that imperial relationship was ended, racial differences, such as they were, fell into a very insignificant place.

So even politically, and not only scientifically in the narrow sense, we may well ask, 'Is race real?' I have heard it argued that there is no such thing as race, since it can neither be defined nor isolated; that it is only a political myth. Unfortunately, to call race a myth does not in the least dispose of the matter. Myths have great power for good or evil in human affairs, often greater power than tangible, calculable causes. In political and social affairs, it is not so much race itself

and actual race difference that count, as awareness of them; and here colour is more often than not the determining factor, for no better reason than that it is obvious to the eye. When I talk about race problems in the Commonwealth I mean problems which arise from consciousness of race differences or race solidarity, whether or not that consciousness is based on scientific fact. I am not therefore using the term 'race' as a strict biological concept; on the other hand, I do not use it as loosely as it is used, for example, in immigration regulations in North America, where you have to declare whether you are of English or Irish or Scots or Welsh race. You might almost as well treat Presbyterians as of different race from Episcopalians.

The essence of race is that it is inherent in the man or woman from birth, cannot be escaped or changed, and must be passed on to his or her offspring, with or without mixture through intermarriage. Of course, other differences besides race conform to the same broad description. Religion or caste, for instance, often has this same immutable and hereditary character, where it is intimately bound up with the social structure, and marriage is only within the group. Differences such as these give rise to problems in the Commonwealth and elsewhere essentially similar to that of race differences, and I call them para-racial.

It seems to me important to get all this straight, because otherwise we may be tempted to think that race problems can be dealt with by general formulae or short cuts which really bear little relation to their true nature. For example, to treat all races as equal politically, in regard to voting and so forth, where they regard each other as separate, does not solve the political problem of race; it merely transfers it to a different plane. The question, 'How is the subordinate race to share in the authority of the governing race?' is translated into 'How is the minority race to share in the authority of the majority race?' In a society like that of South Africa, to extend the vote to more and more Africans, however desirable it may be in the short run, only postpones

the inner problem; so long as the Europeans and the Africans continue to regard themselves as of different race, and their race differences as vital, sooner or later the question must arise, which of them is to hold the decisive power?

From a long-term point of view, if you are to make a direct attack on race problems by trying to annihilate them, the economic barriers between the races are more important than the political ones. Whether or not it is the case that there are no inherently superior or inferior races, certainly with equality of education and economic opportunity the races will tend to become more and more equal culturally. Only thus can we expect them to become ready to treat each other as equal politically. The economic colour bar, which keeps people of certain races from particular trades or professions or ranks, seems to me the point at which the liberal attack on race prejudice should first be launched. Both the marital colour bar and the political colour bar (if I may for the moment identify race with colour) are incidental to certain conditions of race-consciousness, and they may, indeed, continue to be desirable on their merits when cultural equality has been obtained.

### Solution in a Liberal Form of Apartheid?

I say that deliberately. If race-consciousness could be eliminated, the political problem of race would virtually disappear. In tackling that political problem, therefore, we must assume that race-consciousness continues, and must decline solutions which ignore it. Liberalism (with a small l) needs, it seems to me, to find some new ideas in this field and to discard some old prejudices. For instance, in the conditions of those countries of Southern and East Africa where white, black and brown communities live side by side, I find it easier to conceive a long-term solution in terms of a liberal form of Apartheid than in terms of gradually extending the general vote to Africans and Indians and enlarging their representation until it is proportionate to their numbers. To imagine that that process could be completed without explosive conflicts is surely to shut our eyes to reality. But Apartheid as conceived so far, even in its most liberal form, has not yet found the key to the problem of political inter-relationship of the communities whose separateness it assumes and approves.

This is one of the great unsolved problems of democracy, and we must go back to first principles to try to solve it. One almost forgotten first principle is that the essence of true democracy does not lie in the supremacy of the majority, but in the supremacy of the general good, in which the rights of numerical minorities are just as important as the rights of numerical majorities. Here in the west we have been able to reconcile that principle with majority voting because we enjoy exceptional conditions of racial and cultural homogeneity. Here, the minority of one period can become the majority of the next by conversions to its point of view, or by alliances with other minorities, or by shifts of opinion from one generation to another; minorities and majorities are not doomed to perpetual continuance in that relative station by unsurpassable barriers of heredity between them.

Wherever, in the west, such barriers have existed, or have seemed to exist—for instance, between the Catholic French and Protestant English in Canada—the solution has been found in federalism. Federalism was the last great constructive political idea conceived by democracy, with one exception to which I shall come back in a moment: democracy has not yet brought to birth the ideas that will solve the political problem of societies where different races, or para-races, usually at different cultural levels, co-exist within a given nation or region. Communism, on the other hand, does purport to have the simple answer, with its doctrine that race is an illusion of class interest and imperialism, to be swallowed up in the dictatorship of the proletariat.

We shall do well to study how far the federal formula can be applied to the racial conundrum in the Commonwealth and elsewhere, especially federalism in its Swiss form, which is concerned to partition power not only between centre and regions but also at the centre among all main groups whether majority or minorities. No doubt we may find in this way a first approximation to an answer in some parts of the Commonwealth. But we must not forget, first, that the federal solution has hitherto always been adapted to conditions where the different groups were arranged geographically with clear enough distinction, thus enabling the ordinary area-constituency to be used as the political unit; and, secondly, that federalism, as we know it, assumes cultural homogeneity or at least similarity among the different groups, so that, with due weight given to their regional or other special group interests, they may readily work together in common political organs on a footing of equality and mutual respect. More often

than not those conditions are absent where the problem is one of race-conscious elements, usually existing in the wake of imperialism. (By the way, I do not use the term 'imperialism' in any derogatory sense: on the contrary, I think that trusteeship imperialism has often supplied the only working answer yet vouchsafed to the problem of race antagonisms, and that it is the retreat from imperialism which is presenting us with so many and so dangerous difficulties arising out of race.)

I said just now there was one exception to the statement that federalism was the last great constructive political idea of democracy. That exception is the idea of the Commonwealth itself—a free association of equals—equal, that is to say, in status and fundamental rights, though unequal in size and power. The equal nations of the Commonwealth, though independent each in its own sphere, have certain things in common which they amend only by agreement: the Crown, as Head of the community; the common personal status known as British subjecthood or Commonwealth citizenship, and certain other things which derive historically from the common Crown. The Commonwealth thus differs from bodies like the United Nations, which are also concords of independent and equal nations, in that it is organic as contrasted with contractual. It is a living political organism.

Now let us try to apply this idea of status-equality within a common organism to the context of race relations. Consider the example of a country or region where three or more distinct self-conscious races or para-racial communities live intermingled. There are many such cases; I mention Malaya as a sample, with its Malays, Chinese and Indians. The races or groups may be grossly unequal in numbers, and certainly unequal in economic power or cultural advancement; but within an organic whole they may be conceived as equal in status, as well as independent in such measure of communal self-government as it may be possible to accord; at the same time they share certain common rights and duties, implicit, for instance, in common citizenship, which should not be open to amendment save by mutual assent. Status may be every whit as important in such matters as actual power.

### Need for a 'Court of Appeal'

Yet clearly the analogy with the Commonwealth itself breaks down at several points, when the units are not sovereign nations but racial groups living side by side in one area. It seems to me applicable there only within the limits of two provisos: first, that the contents of government are so distributed as to give the maximum autonomy to each racial community in what may be conceived as its own sphere; and, secondly, that there exists at the top some form of supreme 'court of appeal', so to speak, which can decide—as conciliator or arbitrator rather than dictatorial authority—what is to be done when something has to be done and when the method of conference and compromise fails.

As to the first condition, I sometimes wonder whether our major political and economic policies, in the Colonial empire, are co-ordinated in any broad framework of principles and objectives, especially in respect of the ultimate solution of the problem of race. Too often, it seems to me, in the name of advance they appear to be creating conditions in which that solution becomes more rather than less difficult. If I am right, for example, the policy-makers should always keep in their minds' eye the need to break up and distribute the contents of government in such a way that as much as possible can be conducted by relatively small and racially homogeneous units. Indeed I would go further and say that national government must be subordinated to the growth of self-government in communities or smaller areas; for only thus will each community be enabled in due course to take its national place as an equal, by virtue, on the one hand, of its self-sufficiency in those matters which most concern it as a community, and, on the other, of its numbering among its members enough people who by education and experience are able to represent it worthily at all levels of government, from near the top down to the lowest N.C.O.s of administration. How often we see the reverse procedure, backed by economic policies which tend towards large-scale organisation and big capital, controllable only by a highly centralised and strong Government!

The ideal pattern of government in a multi-racial society would surely include a maximum decentralisation of powers, both to localities and to communities, in such matters as education, welfare and housing; further off-loading of other functions like railways and irrigation to non-political, technical commissions, with all communities participating; perhaps, at the centre, a combination of straight federalism with some

(continued on page 134)

# Anxious Days in Sweden

By KURT FRÖDERSTRÖM

**T**Hese are anxious days for us in Sweden; geography and history have given us a difficult position in international politics, and we discuss very much among ourselves the role which we should play. But before I tell you how we feel about the problems that face us, let me try to give you an idea of some of the things which influence our thinking. I am talking to you now from the city of Malmö in Southern Sweden. From here you can go in a ferry across the Sound to Copenhagen, the Danish capital, in a little more than an hour.

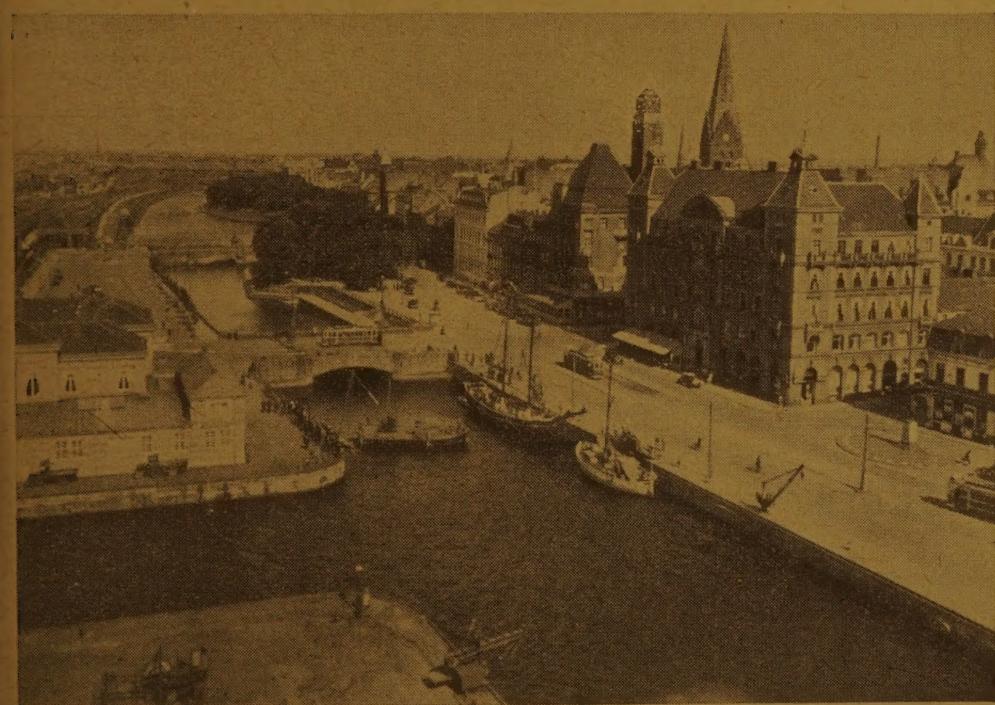
If you look at a map of Northern Europe you will find that the outline of Sweden looks rather like a sleeping lion, with a head and paws in the south, and the curled-in tail in the north. Long before a policy of neutrality was discussed here Sweden was facetiously called 'the sleeping lion', with reference to the unassuming part she played in European politics compared to the days in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with dominions covering Finland, the Baltic States

however, still pursues a policy which aims at standing outside the conflicts of the Great Powers. The official argument supporting this attitude is that the United Nations will cease to function in case of a world-wide conflict. This attitude was recently amplified by the Foreign Minister, Mr. Osten Unden, who said that there is no question of deviating from the Government's general line in foreign policy, positively and actively to participate in universal organisations for the maintenance of peace, but to refuse to join any partial alliances; an attitude which was demonstrated earlier when Sweden rejected proposals that she should enter a defence alliance with Denmark and Norway, and refused to join the Atlantic Pact. On the other hand, it has been natural for Sweden, said the Foreign Minister, to give all the contribution she can to improve the effectiveness of the United Nations, and there has been no hesitation about the Swedish support for the United Nations in their action against the aggressor in Korea, although it is discussed what form this aid should take.

Meanwhile, Sweden is arming as much as her resources allow, to enable herself, if necessary, to defend her own neutrality. New defence measures have recently been adopted as well as police measures against espionage and sabotage, and especially since subversive activities have been discovered in those parts of the country where you find the most important groups of communists.

This was an attempt briefly to summarise the official Swedish policy of neutrality. Here comes an obvious question: How do the people of Sweden regard neutrality, and the position of their country in this dangerous world of today? Before I try to answer that question I think I ought to mention that Sweden is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system of a two-chamber Diet, and that her political, social and cultural structure is built upon the foundation of the western democratic system. There are five parties represented in the Swedish Diet: Conservatives, Liberals, the Farmers Union, Labour and Communists. Labour has been in power since 1945, and the Opposition is formed independently by Conservatives, Liberals and Farmers.

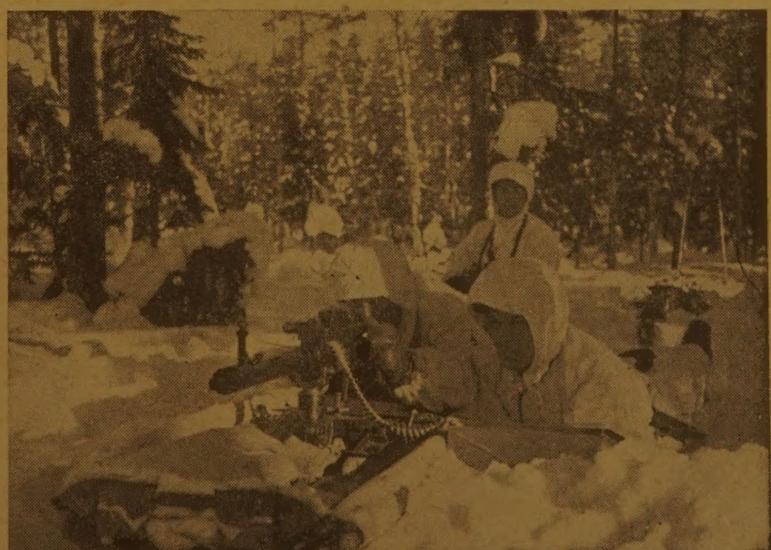
It is true enough that the Communists have got a few seats in the Diet, but they are not regarded as a Swedish political party, as everybody knows



Malmö, third largest city in Sweden, with its encircling canal

and part of Northern Germany. It is now almost 150 years since Sweden waged war. In this century, with two great wars ravaging Europe, Sweden has pursued a policy of neutrality, which has been successful in so far as we have been spared from war. During the first world war when Finland was still part of Tsarist Russia, Sweden, Denmark and Norway issued declarations of neutrality, and also succeeded in staying out of the war. At the outset of the second world war the same kind of declarations were made, but only Sweden remained neutral throughout the war. As we all know, Russia attacked Finland in 1939 and Germany invaded Denmark and Norway in 1940. Swedish neutrality was tainted when the Government gave in to German demands for troop transport on Swedish territory to and from occupied Norway.

These facts are of great significance when you try to explain the attitude of the Swedish people towards the principle of neutrality. Let us first look at the official policy. In 1945 Sweden joined the United Nations, Sweden being what the Charter called 'a peace-loving country'. When Sweden joined United Nations it was widely recognised that the obligations inherent in being a member meant certain modifications of neutrality, and also a new conception of it. Sweden,



Swedish troops in training

that they take their orders from outside the country; that is the reason why I cannot count the Communists in when I talk about the outlook and attitudes of the people of Sweden. The Conservative, Liberal and the Farmers Parties do not officially oppose the foreign policy pursued by our Labour Government; at least not to any great extent. They declare themselves officially willing to support the policy of non-alliance. To get a true picture, however, of the attitude of the people of Sweden one must say that there are widespread misgivings about the effectiveness of neutrality, an opinion held by individuals or groups within all the four large parliamentary parties, the communists still being discounted. This opposition commands great newspapers and its views are often proclaimed in lectures and speeches. The man in the street often says: 'Who is going to take neutrality into consideration if a general war breaks out? The eastern powers will be here in a few hours. Our country will be ravaged, our sons and daughters killed, just because we did not prepare by accepting the offers of help in advance made to us by the democracies'. This opposition could be called a mild and loyal resistance movement, and you find its supporters also within the rank and file of the Labour Party. Their argument is that if the United Nations ceased to function in case of a new world war, so would neutrality; it would vanish into thin air. If Sweden had formed a defence union with Denmark and Norway and joined the Atlantic Pact while there was still time for it, Scandinavia would by now have formed a strong Nordic bloc with unified military forces, and unified weapons, strategy and so forth. The very existence of such a bloc would serve to discourage the aggressor, say the supporters of this loyal resistance movement.

The argument of Government supporters, though not proclaimed officially, seems to be that the key to an appreciation of Swedish neutrality policy is to be found in Finland. If Sweden had joined the Scandinavian defence pact a couple of years ago, the Government spokesmen guardedly imply, the Soviet Union would immediately have answered by occupying the whole of Finland, whereby Sweden's strategic position would immediately have deteriorated beyond hope, as such a Soviet move would give Sweden a common frontier with Russia. To this the unofficial Opposition I have just referred to answers

that Russia already had strongholds within Finland in 1944, and that the Russians at any time since then could easily have occupied the whole of Finland in twelve hours, but that would not necessarily have meant war against Sweden. The Opposition maintains that Russia was certainly not prepared for war two or three years ago, especially in regard to the atomic bomb. Two or three years ago, the Opposition says, Sweden had her chance to consolidate her defence in time in collaboration with Denmark and Norway, a chance which now is most probably forfeited.

There is another view amongst those Swedes who do not believe in neutrality as a cure-all against wars; they say the great mistake in the Swedish policy of neutrality during the second world war was that it presented neutrality to the people as a political ideology, whereas neutrality never can be anything else but a method for trying to keep out of trouble; a method which only works under very favourable circumstances, as was demonstrated thoroughly enough by all the successful German violations of neutral countries in the recent war. It cannot be denied that some groups of the Swedish people were so impressed by this way of dressing neutrality up as an ideology that they became neutral also in their hearts—some of them even neutral in a German way, at any rate up to the time of El Alamein. The situation in this respect is now different, with a historical background of hundreds of years of suspicion of the Great Powers towards the east. The Swedish people in these days certainly are not neutral at heart any more. I do not even think the supporters of the most strict neutrality policy would want them to be.

The people of Sweden will certainly fight for their freedom and fight for their democratic institutions if they are attacked, but the unofficial opposition amongst all groups of Swedish society maintain that Sweden, in spite of her comparatively strong forces, will fight at a great disadvantage—in the empty space created by neutrality, without much hope of receiving help in time.

Let me finally say that it is absolutely above dispute (I still disregard the Communists) that Sweden is happy in having a beloved Royal family, which has served the country so faithfully, and which stands out as a cherished symbol of historic continuity in these troubled days.—*Home Service*

## The Egyptian Point of View

By LORD STANGATE

**T**HE dispute between Britain and Egypt concerns two points: first and more immediate, the British troops stationed in Egypt, and, second, the future of the Sudan. As to the first, the Egyptians demand the withdrawal of our forces from the Canal, and as to the Sudan, the acknowledgment by us of what they call 'the unity of the Nile Valley under the Egyptian Crown'. These demands were put forward in a vigorous way in the recent Speech from the Throne at the opening of the Egyptian Parliament. That the well-known policy of the new Wafd Government should have been voiced by King Farouk is at least proof that he has established in his country those very principles we know as constitutional monarchy, by which we here set so much store.

For the moment no legal question arises because we have a Treaty lasting till 1956; under the Treaty we are allowed to keep troops in Egypt and in return have promised to equip the Egyptian army. Under the same Treaty, it is agreed that the Sudan shall continue to be governed as it has been for the last fifty years. But this Treaty, as I said, expires in six years and it is most important that we should employ the remaining time in coming to a new agreement.

First, as to the troops. How did they get there? Here I must go back a little and remind you that in the seventies of the last century, one of the most famous of the rulers of Egypt, Ismail Pasha, got into financial difficulties. He is called by the Egyptians Ismail the Magnificent, and he certainly did work of incomparable value in modernising the schools, the hospitals, and the public service of his country. His crowning glory was the visit of the French Empress Eugenie to the opening of the Suez Canal. But Ismail lacked financial judgment and his country was brought near to a state of bankruptcy.

Those days were different from ours. We did not talk then about frozen balances. If debtors did not pay, creditors, when they could, applied direct force to collect their money. In Egypt disorders naturally followed financial chaos, and, in 1882, the British sent eight ironclads to bombard Alexandria. The country was invaded by a small British army. Cairo was taken by a squadron, the Citadel (what we might call their Tower of London) was occupied by British troops who remained there continuously until 1946. They were then moved to the Canal zone, where they are today. Up to 1936, this arrangement rested on sheer force. The British troops were there because the Egyptians could not drive them out. To justify their presence a large number of diplomatic reasons were advanced in turn. First, there was the necessity to preserve public order while solvency was restored. Next, it was necessary to remain to keep out the French. When in 1904 we came to terms with the French, it was necessary to remain because the Suez Canal was a vital artery of the British Empire. Now that the Asian dominions are free, it is argued that the troops must remain because of the Russian danger.

I do not deny that all these reasons have had force, according to the ethics of their time, and the last is one which might be expected to appeal to Egyptian self-interest. But to tell the truth, many Egyptians do not take the same view as do Western Powers, and they would like if possible to stand aside from any conflict. But even those statesmen of wider experience who see the need to co-ordinate Middle East defence are still unwilling to co-operate. They say quite simply that if Egypt is to have a proper place in such schemes, she must select it and occupy it of her own will. Real freedom, they would add, is a thing that Egypt has not known for seventy years.

How true are such statements? Up to the first world war Turkey was Egypt's nominal suzerain. At the conclusion of that war, when Turkey was defeated, the Arab countries were liberated, but not Egypt. Syria, the Lebanon, Iraq and others soon became independent, but Egypt was compelled to remain in a condition of subjection. Indeed, for a time she was actually a British protectorate. Since 1922, no doubt, efforts had been made to put a good appearance on her position, but while troops remain against her will on her territory, she does not consider that she enjoys independence. Although we may have forgotten it, Egypt has not forgotten that her great leader Zaghlul Pasha was imprisoned by us, nor has she forgotten the severity with which popular demonstrations were repressed at that time. Egyptians argue that if their country is to become a friend and ally it can only be by a reversal of policy and by giving her a position of freedom and equality. They say flatly that the British occupation is out of harmony with the Charter of the United Nations.

### Combining Military Necessity with Egyptian Rights

In 1946, I was sent by Mr. Bevin on a delegation with the British Ambassador to see how we could combine what we considered to be military necessity with Egyptian rights. The Prime Minister of that time was a patriot of great ability, Sidki Pasha (he had been, by the way, a fellow prisoner with Zaghlul). The first thing he said was, 'You can have no agreement with Egypt except on the basis of evacuation'. Had we been able on our arrival to announce that in future British troops would only be in Egypt by Egyptian consent, we could have had a treaty in a month, and a treaty acclaimed by the whole Egyptian people. As it was, there were weeks of wrangling before this point was settled. In the end, an agreement was made, an agreement satisfactory from our military point of view, and at least sufficiently approved by Egyptian public opinion to be endorsed unanimously by their Parliament.

Before I leave the question of troops on the Canal, I must point out the effect which this dispute is having upon Egyptian internal policy. Their statesmen realise the urgent need for social change. There is perhaps no country in the world showing a sharper contrast between riches and poverty than Egypt. It lives entirely on the river. The Nile is its life, the extension of its irrigable area is vital; the population needing nourishment increases by about 500,000 annually. These problems are urgent, but they are all apt to be put aside until independence is secured.

I have already mentioned that an agreement had actually been arrived at in 1946 with Sidki Pasha and had secured Egyptian parliamentary approval. It broke down at the last moment on the question of the Sudan, and I have little doubt that on this issue the sympathies of the great majority of British people are not with the Egyptians. The Sudan has always been of special interest to us, partly because of the heroic story of General Gordon, partly because of its reconquest in 1898 with the personal participation of Mr. Churchill, and more particularly because its Government and its Civil Service are known to be among the best of their kind in the world.

I will ask you, therefore, to be patient for a few moments while I explain the Egyptian point of view, historical and actual, and point out the differences which divide us from Cairo opinion. First, as to the history. I do not think the facts are disputed, though it may be argued that they have little relevance today. One hundred and thirty years ago the founder of the present Egyptian dynasty, Mahomet Ali, following earlier conquerors from the north, subjugated the Sudan. He planted the Egyptian flag, and the Egyptians feel about their flag as we do about ours. The bankruptcy of Ismail Pasha to which I have referred brought chaos to the Sudan, and saw the rise of a great slave dealer—the Mahdi, whose posthumous son, by the way, is now a leading political figure in Khartoum. I am speaking of the 'eighties, the days of the tragic death of General Gordon and the withdrawal from the Sudan. The financial position of Egypt certainly did not permit its retention.

Then we come to the late 'nineties—to the days of the Kitchener reconquest. For this expedition Great Britain supplied the organising power and many troops, but Egypt paid two-thirds of the cost and furnished many troops also. What we have to remember is that the Commander of the Forces, Kitchener, bore the title of Sirdar, wore a fez and reconquered the territory in the name of his master the Khedive of Egypt. No one considered the Sudan to be other than Egyptian territory. Indeed, when the French appeared at Fashoda, they were politely told to withdraw—not because they were on British territory, but because they were on Egyptian territory. You can under-

stand, then, how strongly the Egyptian feels that his monarch is entitled to be called King of Egypt and the Sudan.

As to administration, in 1899, Lord Cromer set up what are called the Condominium agreements, which did not exclude the Egyptians from the Sudan but established a Government independent of the Cairo Cabinet, and above all, and this was most important, completely free from the interference of foreign powers under the guise of capitulations, which made the task of Lord Cromer in Egypt almost impossible. The case for what the Egyptians call 'the Unity of the Nile Valley' is explained in the following striking passage—I wonder if you recognise the style:

Here, then, is a plain and honest reason for the River War; to unite territories that could not indefinitely have continued divided, to combine peoples whose future welfare is inseparably intermingled; to collect energies which concentrated may promote a common interest; to join together who could not improve apart. These are the objects which history will pronounce, have justified the enterprise.

That was written by a young officer of the Lancers called Winston Churchill; I should like to add that who holds the Sudan holds Egypt by the throat.

But we have been talking of a past age. We are not living now in a time of great empires; today the demand for self-government is insistent and is recognised to be right, and that applies to the Sudan as well as to any other country. You must not expect the Egyptians to understand the growth of a Commonwealth as well as we do ourselves, but their conception, I believe, is some form of Commonwealth free from foreign influence, in which the Sudan can enjoy the same liberty as do our own dominions. Unfortunately, the negotiations in 1946 were bedevilled by a prior announcement made in the House of Commons that 'the objects [of the Sudan administration] must be to establish organs of self-government as a first step towards eventual independence'. For the Egyptian, that prejudged the whole issue and, as a matter of fact, that has never been British policy. All we have asked is that the Sudanese should be entirely free to decide for themselves. The nearest that Sidki Pasha went to accepting this view was to declare that when the moment came, nobody could set a limit to the wishes of the Sudanese people. It was on this point, and on this point alone, that an agreement broke down.

I have tried to put before you the opinions held, I believe, by all patriotic Egyptians. I have done it in the hope that Britain and Egypt may be able to reach a lasting understanding. That hope is not baseless, for all those who know Egypt will testify to her genius for warmhearted friendship.—*Home Service*

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Those acquainted with Miss Freya Stark's books will not need to be reminded of her very considerable talent for prose description. That she should write so well is all the more remarkable when we realise, from her unusually frank autobiography, *Traveller's Prelude* (Murray, 18s.), that she had practically no formal or indeed any education as a child. She was born in Paris, where both her parents, who were first cousins, were studying art. Her early years seem to have been spent in a series of periodic uprootings, for her father was a restless man, unable to stay for long in any one place, but with a passion, which his daughter has inherited, for the wilder parts of Dartmoor. While she was still a child the family seems, almost imperceptibly and without hard feelings, to have disintegrated, the father emigrating to Canada, where he became a fruit farmer, the mother taking Freya and her younger sister to live in Italy. There now followed a period of hardship and poverty. At the age of sixteen, Miss Stark was working in a factory, doing all the family cooking and running the household on a bare minimum of money. Her mother seems to have been an extraordinary character: in some ways a woman of considerable talent but psychologically incapable of making any real home for her two young children. When the first world war broke out Miss Stark, who is trilingual, worked at censorship, and later became a nurse on the Italian front, where she was caught up in the retreat from Caporetto. After the war came studies, the first attempts to learn Arabic, mountaineering in the Alps and the building of a new home on the Franco-Italian frontier. And then, on November 18, 1927, the first departure for Arabia, though 'still very delicate, and with a blood pressure of only 78 instead of 130'.

This bare outline can give no idea of the real quality of Miss Stark's book, for behind its record of movement and events is a subtle study of human friendship, childhood and youth, told beautifully and with great sincerity. Naturally, with a varied experience such as hers, she has evolved a philosophy of her own. 'The moral of it all seems to be', she notes, 'that everyone develops his own soul in the world, and the crime of crimes is to interfere with this process in those you are responsible for; perhaps that is what is meant by Christ's word about children?' This is one of the most distinguished autobiographies of 1950.

# The Listener

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## A Little Known Art

**O**N another page we publish a talk by Mr. Martin Cooper, well known as a specialist on the 'food of love', concerning the love of food. Mr. Cooper is no gastronomical patriot. He points out—not for the first time—that 'there is no strong or widespread tradition of good food in England except in a few country districts'. When one considers how much the average man or woman talks about food, this is strange, but true. Our ancestors ate roast beef and potatoes, our fathers ate roast beef and potatoes, and today (if the ration permits) we eat corned beef and potatoes. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.* In country hotels a small piece of frozen cod levers itself up off the plate to greet you on arrival. In the expensive town restaurants the cooks are usually foreign. In the smaller restaurants they may not be, but will compensate themselves by producing the menus in French, though *pouding au riz* is rice pudding still. But one must try not to be unkind or we shall be accused of sabotaging the Festival of Britain. A hotel guide that dared to highlight the restaurants could find quite a few 'starred' places and nearly every poet and most stockbrokers know a good and inexpensive eating place in the capital, which remains good and inexpensive until perhaps they tell everyone else about it.

One supposes that we British, who are naturally modest and unassuming, are, so far as good food is concerned, humbled in the presence of our mighty neighbour. The French bestride the culinary world like a Colossus. In France famous professional cooks are even sometimes women. (In Britain we look down the list of celebrated cooks, stop for a moment at the name of Mrs. Beeton, and pass on hastily.) In France one embarks on gastronomical tours and eating as well as cooking is an art of a high order. In Germany one thinks of frankfurters and sauerkraut, in Italy of risotto, spaghetti, macaroni and oil, in Greece of mutton and honey, in the Scandinavian countries of *smörgåsbord* and milk, in the United States of pot roast and pie à la mode. (The American character, H. L. Mencken once observed, is largely shaped by dyspepsia induced by fruit pies.) But who associates any single particular dish with France—except the ignorant who think of snails? The broad trail of the gastronome winds from Brittany to the Midi. Writing about it makes one hungry.

Why is eating a little known art in this country? An army marches on its stomach—and we have always been soldiers. The German saying '*Man ist was man isst*' (one is what one eats) applies as well here as in most places. We are not an inhospitable people and the tradition of entertaining by feeding guests at one's own home instead of the village inn dates back to at least the Middle Ages. Are we then Philistines or is it that we regard bothering unduly about the sauce Béchamel a form of Philistinism? It is no use pretending that the explanation lies solely in prolonged rationing and the overwork to which the women of this country are for the most part now subjected. For our national purblindness is historical. In the past we may have eaten much more than we do now (a foreigner noted in the sixteenth century that we were the best-fed people in Europe, but we did not eat more delicately). Can the explanation be simply that our genius does not lie in that direction, just as (some would say) we have never produced a great painter or composer? Or is it—dreadful thought!—that most of us do not really think eating is so important after all?

## What They Are Saying

Foreign broadcasts on China and peace proposals

CHINA'S REJECTION of the United Nations' peace proposals was the main subject for comment at the end of last week. The general reaction from western commentators was one of great disappointment. But while the attitude as expressed in the press of western Europe—and particularly France—was to urge caution in taking the next step, press comment in America stressed that no further time must be lost in branding China as an aggressor. Thus, the *New York Herald-Tribune* was quoted as saying:

The United Nations has been so preoccupied with its efforts to arrange a truce that it has come perilously near losing its sense of reality and the support of vast numbers of the world's men and women. It must now rouse itself, wipe the memory of the dream from the mind, and go about the grim and serious business of deciding how to deal with Red China. No longer can it delay acknowledging that China is an aggressor.

The *New York Times* took a similar line:

First it was said that the Chinese Government was concerned only about the safety of the power installations on the Yalu river. Then it was suggested that it simply did not understand the way of westerners and took alarm at the northern moves of western armies. Then, when the western armies were no longer moving northwards, but retreating southward, it was argued that, after all, the solution of the problem had been approached from the wrong angle; nothing could be done to clarify the issue without admitting Communist China to the United Nations. And meanwhile the Communist Chinese armies have been marching, marching, marching. We believe it is high time to identify the aggressor.

In India, the *Times of India* was quoted for the opinion that it would be disastrous if the Chinese rejection resulted in making the United Nations abandon all further efforts at a Far Eastern settlement:

The most fruitful approach for a settlement lies through negotiations on the wider issues of China's representation in the United Nations and the future of Formosa. Even the United States policy-makers must realise that an extension of the conflict in the Far East is the only alternative to negotiation of a wider settlement and that such an extension will injure rather than promote the best interests of the United States.

In Australia, the *Sydney Morning Herald* expressed the view that the United Nations' generous offer had been interpreted by the Chinese leaders as a sign of weakness. The only course of action now, added the paper, was to brand China as an aggressor. In France, much of the press urged caution and expressed the hope that the slowing-down in the fighting in Korea might signify that China, while turning down the cease-fire proposals, did favour a *de facto* truce. The M.R.P. *L'Aube*, while stressing that terms of negotiation would be meaningless unless they were preceded by a cease-fire, nevertheless refused to believe that all hope of negotiation had been lost, and welcomed Peking's suggestion—in its counter-proposals—for a seven-power, and not merely a four-power, conference, 'thereby showing a regard for France and other nations'. This sentiment was repeated in a number of other French papers, which insisted on France's right to make her voice heard in any conference regarding a Far Eastern settlement. In Switzerland, the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* was quoted for the belief that the United Nations could now do little else except condemn Peking's aggression. The *Gazette de Lausanne* was of the opinion that 'there are still sufficient opportunities to come to an agreement'.

Opinion was similarly divided in Sweden, where on the one hand the Social Democrat *Attentidnungen* thought it was difficult to see how any further efforts at mediation could be made, while the *Expressen* thought the door to future negotiations had not been definitely closed. A Swedish commentator, broadcasting to the United States, while admitting that the Chinese reply was a severe blow to the hopes of peace, added that 'the great majority of Swedes' felt that the imposition of economic sanctions and the severance of diplomatic ties would be a risky venture and would probably have little effect on the war in Korea. A commentator broadcasting from Madrid radio stated that China's counter-proposals were 'entirely unacceptable' and had been framed, no doubt, with a view to prolonging the war in accordance with the Soviet Union's interests in confining United States' military forces to the Far East. Moscow radio gave publicity to the news of the Chinese rejection, but—up to the time of writing—has refrained from comment. Meanwhile, Russian broadcasts were at pains to dub the United States the aggressor.

# Did You Hear That?

## THE OPERA ADDICT

'I'D MEANT TO HAVE a change', said PHILIP HOPE-WALLACE in a talk in 'Woman's Hour', 'but I can never keep away from theatres, or especially opera houses, even on holiday. The very first minute I got to Munich—without a meal or a wash or the certainty that I should get a bed for the night—I rushed to the opera and just made it with thirty seconds to spare, after we had driven like mad, through blinding rain, all day. Going to the theatre night after night at home has never cured me of a childish anxiety about getting to a theatre in time: we had bought a newspaper at our first stop in Germany, and seen that the Munich opera was due to start at eight. By going all out, down that tremendous motor road which Hitler had built, we reckoned we might just make it. But it was a near thing; and the last half-hour was a terrible ordeal for a fusspot like me.'

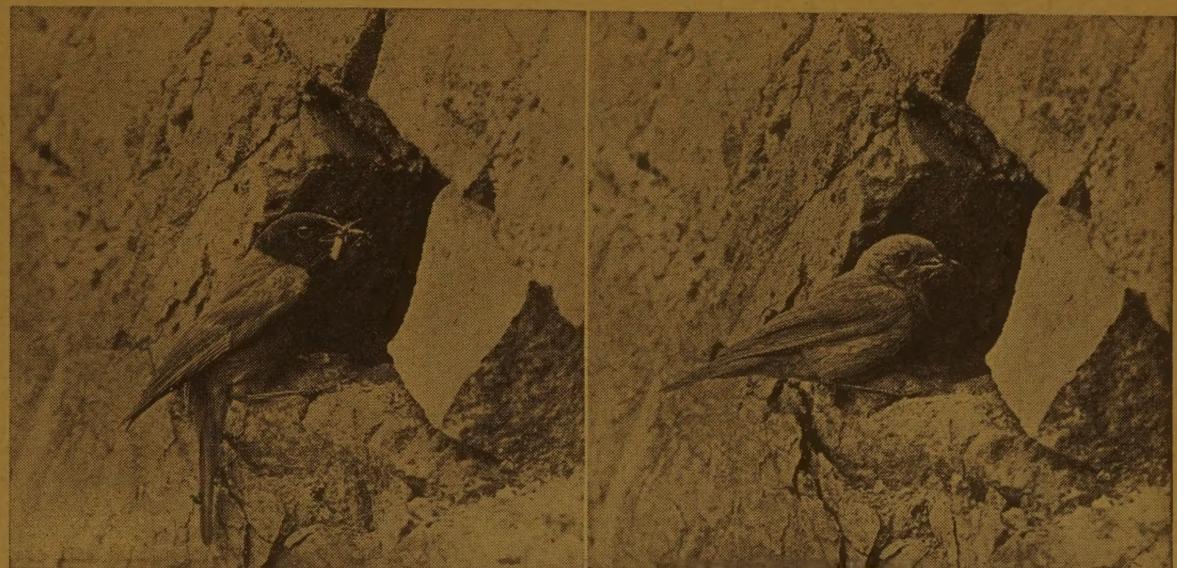
'It is always awkward arriving in towns after dark, even if you think you remember them as well as I thought I remembered Munich. I knew it had been knocked about, but I was not prepared for it to be so unrecognisable. It is a shell, a husk, maimed and mutilated, like so many of its male inhabitants. But some things are still going strong, and one of them is certainly the opera; whatever else had been wrecked, there is always the opera. I don't want to suggest that life is impossibly harsh in Munich amid the ruins; some things, such as the huge Brauhaus beer cellar, crammed to the doors with flushed Bavarians crashing their beer mugs on the tables in time to the band, is just as before. But the opera now seems to stand specially for something which links these bothered people on to life; something which makes life tolerable—a sort of substitute for comfort or grandeur. The point is, when you go to the opera, you go to something which has not been bombed, where the old magic still works; where, when the lights go down and the first magic chord of Wagner's opera the "Meistersinger" breaks the hush—a rich firm chord such as few but German orchestras can give you, like a round stone dropped into a pool of silence—then the magic is working again, for some hours you are shut away in a world where there is no bomb damage, no crutches, no resentment, no hopelessness. That is terribly important to a people as sentimental as the Germans; I think the same sort of thing happened to us too in the darkest days of the war; there was some special desire to make contact with the masterpieces of music and the theatre.'

'Some people would say the Germans make too much fuss about music, but somehow, that first night in Munich, I felt I understood their feelings of absorption; and I think I knew then that whatever towns I was going through on my way to Vienna, I should be making a busman's holiday of it and going to the theatre or the opera just as often as I could'.

## THE BIRDS OF LONDON

'One July day some nine or ten years ago I was walking through Dean's Yard, in the shadow of Westminster Abbey', said R. S. FITTER in a Home Service broadcast. 'I was feeling rather pleased, for my companion and I had just been to see a nest of the black redstart—it was on a ledge over the old school gate of Westminster School, and was only the fourth nest of this bird, which at the time was considered rare, to be found in the centre of London. But we had a greater thrill in store, at least I thought it was a greater thrill, and I rather think my friend

did too. As we came through the empty square, for it was a Sunday afternoon, I glanced up, and said quickly, "Do you see what I see?" He did, for what we were both looking at was the anchor-shaped outline of a peregrine falcon—in America many call it a duck-hawk: it was drifting slowly up-wind, some two or three hundred feet above us. I cannot recall where I had last seen a peregrine at that time, but I am sure it was a wild and lonely place, probably one of the remoter mud-flats of Essex, or perhaps the rugged cliffs of Cornwall or Pembrokeshire.



Cock (left) and hen black redstart, with food for the young, at their nest-hole in a bombed basement in Cripplegate

shire. Certainly those are the places that come to mind when I think of the peregrine, and I was never more surprised than to spy this stranger in the heart of London.

'But though I had not seen one there before, it was by no means the first time that this prince of falcons had come to town. Every now and then the peregrine comes to St. Paul's Cathedral, and takes up his abode there, while he dines at his leisure on the pigeons. Even so recently as eighteen months ago, indeed, one of my fellow bird-watchers, who happens to be a very distinguished civil servant, saw an even more remarkable sight than mine. He watched a peregrine falcon chasing a kestrel over Westminster, not far from the Central Hall. A kestrel hovering over the Horse Guards Parade, or dropping like a stone on some unfortunate sparrow, is now almost a commonplace sight of London, for several pairs build in steeples and belfries within sound of Bow bells; but to see one being actually chased by a peregrine!'

'Another bird-watcher, who is eminent in a different walk of life—he is at present head of one of the London colleges—saw an almost equally remarkable sight at about the same time. He watched a migration of long-tailed tits in progress through the City of London. He first heard about a dozen of them calling, together with eight blue tits, in the plane trees near St. Paul's. In spite of the noise of the traffic he was able to pick out that curious little splutter that tells you, when you are walking down a country lane, that you will shortly see that tiny ball of feathers, with apparently one long feather stuck in for a tail—the long-tailed tit. These birds flew off westwards and were followed by the bird-watcher on foot and by bus. About ten minutes later he came up with ten of them on the vanes and tower of the Church of St. Andrew and St. Peter in Holborn, and five minutes later still saw four, with two blue tits, on some of the plane-trees in Fetter Lane. During the same afternoon, several more were heard in Lincoln's Inn, and ten were seen, with blue tits, in the plane trees and elms in Torrington Square in Bloomsbury. I have myself seen long-tailed tits in London only once, about a dozen years ago, when a party invaded London and spent most of the month of November there, and a migratory movement on this scale is without precedent.'

'Both these incidents which I have mentioned are recorded in two

remarkable little reports, which appear every year and are devoted wholly to the birds of the metropolis. One is issued by the Ministry of Works, and is the report of the Committee on Bird Sanctuaries in the Royal Parks. It is called *Birds in London* and can be had from His Majesty's Stationery Office for 1s. 6d. The other is the result of private enterprise, and is called *The London Bird Report*. You can get it for 2s. 6d. from the Secretary of the London Natural History Society at the British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road, S.W.7.

### THE WOMEN OF TIBET

Speaking in the Light Programme of a visit some years ago to Lhasa, Colonel F. SPENCER CHAPMAN said: 'We saw a good deal of the officials and their women-folk. We found them just as friendly and almost as hardworking as their country cousins, but very much smarter; indeed the complicated finery of a Tibetan lady of fashion is an astonishing sight.'



A photograph just received of Tibetan women refugees in India

The hair, always jet black, is parted in the centre and pulled tightly down on either side to hang in long pigtails. A triangular crown, covered with seed pearls and studded with corals the size of cherries, rests on top of the head, and from this false hair hangs on either side, framing the oval face, with its pale complexion and Mongolian cast of features. On each side of the face are hung heavy earrings, a good six inches long and two inches wide, of turquoise and orange-coloured Tibetan gold. A long, sleeveless robe of violet-patterned silk is worn, and a full-sleeved blouse of pale green silk. The boots are of scarlet and green felt, and a long apron is worn, woven in horizontal stripes of many colours. A charm box, four inches square, of gold and turquoise set with other semi-precious stones, hangs at the throat from a jade and onyx necklace, while a four-inch-wide band of seed pearls hangs from the left shoulder to the waist, and in the centre of it is a large circular ornament of precious stones.

The Tibetan women share with the men the management of their estates, and if the husband is away on business or on pilgrimage the wife is left in charge of affairs. If a man marries a girl who has succeeded to her father's estates, he takes a subordinate position in their management. Most of the shops in Tibet are kept by women, and one sees them acting as porters, water-carriers, and indeed doing their full share of hard, manual work.

When we went to official luncheon parties at the houses of the Lhasa officials, we were much struck by the *chang*-girls whose job it is to fill up the guests' glasses with *chang*, or barley beer, and to see that they drink it. These girls are of good family and are dressed in all the regalia already described, and have rouged cheeks and black beauty patches; as they are very attractive, and as the beer is excellent, it is not surprising that these parties are a great success.

In general the Tibetans are monogamous, but in Lhasa some of the officials have two or even three wives. Among the nomads and herdsmen the practice of polyandry, that is one woman having several

husbands, still exists, and it is strange that this should be found in Tibet of all countries where about one fifth of the men are monks and therefore not allowed to marry. Some ascribe this custom to the scarcity of arable land in Tibet: in order not to split up a holding, a girl is married to three or four brothers at the same time. It seems to work fairly well, probably because only one brother is likely to be at home at the same time—one will be away all the summer taking the yaks and sheep up to the high grazing grounds, another may go up to China to buy tea and silk, while a third drives pack-trains of the coarse Tibetan wool down to India to exchange it for household utensils or cotton cloth'.

### QUAKER MEMORIES

'It was Elizabeth Fry', said ELIZABETH HOWARD in a Home Service talk, 'who from quite modest personal actions started all modern prison reform. American Quakers began to protest against slavery as early as 1688 but it was not till a hundred years later that it could be said that no Quaker either in England or America possessed a single Negro slave. Indeed by that time any slave-holding Quaker would have been turned out of the Society of Friends. I have in my treasure box a white satin reticule with the picture of a slave holding up his fettered hands over the words "Am I not a man and a brother?" This bag was carried by Quaker ladies when they went out to distribute anti-slavery tracts. Most Quakers gave up taking sugar in tea, as the sugar was grown by slave labour. My own father as a boy was rather forcibly encouraged to make this sacrifice, the result rather naturally being that in later life he liked three lumps in every cup of tea.'

'Folded up in my treasure box is another reminder of the rough and ready methods in the old days. This is a poster, with two rather primitive woodcuts, the first one showing a little boy being driven with a whip by his master, the chimney-sweep, up into the dark and sooty chimney over the large open fireplace. Side by side with this is a second woodcut showing the newly invented long-handled brush, and underneath is an earnest plea for its use: "The public and the friends of humanity are most earnestly invited to use this simple and effective machine, to supersede the necessity of the revolting cruelties inseparable from the forlorn state of the unfortunate climbing boys".

'My great-great-grandfather, Sampson Lloyd, in his younger days was what was known as a "gay Quaker"; that is to say, he did not wear the plain dress, and felt free to take part in worldly amusements. "He was a remarkably handsome young man", says a chronicler, "with a fine tall figure and comely face, and this was a temptation to him to run into vanity. He dressed in the fashion of the day, visited in high society and became at last the companion of Lords and Ladies". As he still sometimes put in an appearance at a Quaker meeting, he one day heard a sermon which showed him the error of his ways, and going home he ordered his tailor to make him a sober suit of Quaker apparel. When the tailor came and laid the clothes down on the chair, "he felt as though they had brought him his coffin. It was a severe trial, but he flinched not from it, and from that day forth wore the Quaker dress".

'The better-class Quaker women contrived to have their dove-coloured gowns made from rich material, and with the softest of muslin kerchiefs folded over their shoulders, and the finest of net or muslin caps on their heads, the Quaker dress could be very attractive and becoming. Among my treasures is one of the bonnets worn by a great-aunt in the early nineteenth century. It is of cardboard covered with grey silk and is so long and narrow that the wearer can only see straight before her. When a woman Friend rose to preach in meeting she would take off her bonnet and hang it on a peg often provided for the purpose behind her seat. Under the bonnet she wore a close-fitting muslin cap which decently concealed her hair, but did not hide her face.'

'Though Sampson Lloyd perhaps ceased to "conspire with Lords and Ladies" after he ceased to be "gay", he had some interesting acquaintances. Among these was the great Dr. Samuel Johnson, who came in one day to visit him. The two men had a lively discussion over a religious treatise, and the Doctor, who hated anyone to disagree with him, lost his temper, threw the book on the floor and stamped on it. Later he went on with the debate at the dinner table in such angry tones, and struck the table so violently that the two children present, the elder aged thirteen, were so frightened that they longed to escape. It appears that this was a midday dinner, for the story goes that later in the day the Doctor went down to my great-great-grandfather's business in the city, and called out in stentorian tones, "I say, Lloyd, I'm the best theologian, but you are the best Christian!"'

# Recent Trends in Soviet Agriculture

By MARGARET MILLER

**I**T is a curious experience for anyone who has been brought up in a highly industrialised community like our own, where most of us live in towns, to live for a time in a country like Russia and realise how very much the balance swings the other way. There, the country is supreme, the towns are of relatively little importance. Even after all the intensive industrialisation carried out in the five-year



Restaurant for workers on a big state farm in Salsk Steppes, Rostov region

plans between the wars—that is as late as 1941—over two-thirds of the population of the U.S.S.R. still lived in villages.

I can remember this difference being brought home to me in all sorts of unexpected little ways when I was visiting Russia in the early nineteen-thirties. During the summer months one is conscious of a rising tension. The whole country seems to concentrate on the progress of the harvest. I took shelter from a sudden downpour in a Moscow doorway one day, and talked to a thin, bareheaded old lady who was sheltering with me. She scanned the sky anxiously, and her talk was all of how the weather was likely to affect harvest operations. I was travelling a good deal that summer, mostly in the industrial areas of the Don Basin, and I sent my friend in Moscow a series of telegrams, telling her of various changes of plan. Some of the telegrams never arrived; others were delivered after I had got back. No one was surprised. It was harvest time. Nor was anyone surprised that the little blue letter-boxes, which are fixed on to the walls in the Moscow streets, were stuffed chronically full, and never seemed to be emptied. There was no time for such details when the harvest was in full swing.

This is all very interesting for a visitor, but for the Russian people such dependence on the whims of 'His Majesty the Harvest', as a Tsarist Minister once put it, has always been a calamity, something to hate and to dread. It meant that there was no stability in economic life. It was impossible to plan ahead. A year of good harvest might be followed by a bad year, bringing with it all too frequently disastrous crop failures, and the terrible scourge of famine and disease. And so successive Governments have always been most anxious to get from agriculture not only higher crop yields, but yields that were more stable, and more predictable from year to year.

It is this basic need that is behind the great plan

for agriculture announced in October, 1948. It is not just one plan, but a series of complex and technical measures for afforestation and other improvements. These are being applied over an area about eight times as large as the whole territory of Great Britain and Ireland combined, and they will not be completed until 1965, seventeen years from the date of announcement.

The plans are to operate in what has always been the most important seat of agricultural activity in Russia, the steppe-lands and famous black-earth regions of European Russia. The enemy to be guarded against strikes from the east, from the desert areas of Asia, in the shape of hot dry winds—the *sukhovei*, 'or dry-blower' to give it its Russian name—that scorch and parch the lands, and in dry seasons bring about disastrous droughts. They also bring in their train the danger of soil erosion in this important agricultural area. The primary aims of the plans are, first of all, to raise a great protective shield of trees against these disaster-bringing winds, and secondly, to improve the general water supply in the whole region. To do this, extensive measures of afforestation are to be applied, as well as devices for the preservation of moisture in the soil; reservoirs are to be built, the number of ponds is to be increased, and crop rotation systems are to be introduced. The ideas behind these schemes are not new: they embody the work of several generations of Russian scientists, dating well back into the nineteenth century. But they are now being applied on a large scale, not just being discussed.

Anyone who has travelled in these parts will realise how important this whole conception must be to the Russian people. In some ways the great open steppe-lands are very attractive. Driving across them in the summer is like being afloat on a great rolling sea of green. But less pleasant impressions remain as well—thick dust-clouds on the rough country roads, swirling dust-clouds in the treeless streets of the cities. It is always with a sense of immense relief that one gets back to the wooded areas around Moscow.

But to provide these hundreds of miles of shelter-belts will involve a tremendous amount of work. Trees will have to be planted on literally millions of acres. And experts who know about such matters say that the introduction and establishment of cropland and meadow-land rotations is an even more laborious and ambitious undertaking, involving a much larger area than that covered by the afforestation scheme. To carry this out means an enormous task of farm planning. And this part of the plan is to be completed in six years, that is, by



Afforestation machines planting seedlings in the Stalingrad region—part of the Soviet Government's plan to preserve the soil by giving protection against the hot dry winds which scorch and parch the lands

1955. It is a truly vast undertaking, and obviously would only be done for something which is thought to be of first-rate importance; so it is worth considering the underlying significance of the whole project. What Russia's rulers are really trying to do is to overcome one of the fundamental handicaps that have burdened the country throughout her history. Russia has been called 'a stepchild of Nature'. The vast mass of her territories consists of a great plain, with mountain ranges only at the extremities, in the east, west and south. Hence there are no natural factors to soften the rigours of her continental climate, and to protect her lands, either from the frozen winds sweeping down from the Arctic north, or from these scorching winds from the east. The men in the Kremlin, devoted as they are to their materialist philosophy, believe that man can control and modify his natural environment, and that there is no need to accept such basic handicaps as being permanent and unchangeable. One of the scientists whose ideas are behind this scheme, Professor Michurin, is quoted as saying: 'We cannot wait for favours from Nature, our task is to take them from her'. So the Soviet Government is going ahead in this costly endeavour to 'rectify nature' and to change the fundamental characteristics of an immense section of her territories.

### Stepchild of Nature and History

The *sukhovei*—that dry wind—is not the only bad thing that has come to the Russian lands from the east. Centuries ago the Mongol barbarians came that same way. When the yoke was finally thrown off, Russia found herself far behind her western neighbours economically and culturally, found herself weak and divided. Russia has never outgrown the deep resentment engendered by this fear of her own backwardness and relative weakness, and anger against the unscrupulous enemies who, as it has always seemed to her, have taken advantage of her weakness. She feels herself to be not only a stepchild of Nature but a stepchild of history as well. Stalin voiced this age-old fear before the war, in a speech underlining the need for speedy industrialisation. Russia has always been beaten because of her backwardness, he said. If she remained backward, she would be beaten again. She would have to catch up with the advanced capitalist countries, whatever it might cost her, in order to be safe.

The enemy struck again in 1941, this time from the west, and nowhere were his blows more cruelly felt than in agriculture. By 1943, the farms were stripped almost bare by systematic looting and destruction. And in addition to the physical destruction of war, the Soviet Government had to worry about the effects of the war in loosening centralised control over the collective farm system. This control had to be restored at once, for if war-time irregularities had been allowed to continue the whole structure of collectivisation might well have broken down.

What had happened during the war years? For one thing, quite a lot of collective farm land had been taken over by peasants for their individual use, or factories had got into the habit of cultivating part of the land of nearby collective farms. Whatever the cause, a good deal of land had passed out of the ownership of the collectives. Another trouble was that administrative staffs had grown out of all proportion to the number of other workers engaged on the farms. Also, a great many people performing services, for example hairdressers, shoe-repairers and the like, were being paid out of collective farm funds when they should have been paid by the farmers themselves, out of their individual incomes. Collective farm property was being pilfered on quite a serious scale. Payment for 'work-days', that is, the measurement of the amount of work done by the farmers on the collectivised land, was subject to all sorts of irregularities. Chairmen and other officials were taking arbitrary decisions on management questions, without consulting the members. The Government set up a special Council for Farm Affairs to put all this right, and the Council set to work in the autumn of 1946, making extensive use of the well-known Soviet weapon, the purge. A great many chairmen and collective farm officials were removed from their posts. Thousands of officials were swept out of administrative posts and sent back to 'productive work' on the land. Lands and livestock improperly transferred from collective to individual ownership were restored to the collective farms.

All this shows that the machinery of collective farming suffered serious deterioration during the war, but it would be a mistake to interpret what happened as an organised revolt of the peasantry against the whole idea of collectivisation. One gets the impression from examining the events of war time that the peasants then were more apathetic and disinterested than actively hostile. This is not surprising when one

remembers that it was the Government at an earlier stage who wanted collective farming, in order to satisfy their own needs for greater agricultural production. It was certainly not spontaneously adopted by the peasantry. On the contrary, collective farms were only finally established as the predominant form of economic unit in agriculture after what amounted to a bitter civil war between the Government and the peasants.

It was not until 1935 that the collective farm system really settled down, and then it was on the basis of a compromise. The Government got what they wanted, which was increased production and control of crops. The peasant's hunger for individual ownership was appeased by the grant of permanent tenure of the land belonging to his collective farm, and the permission given to farm his own small individual plots for his family needs, in addition to his work on the collective land of the farm. Now collectivisation is being carried another long step forward. Early in 1950 the Government decreed that smaller collective farms throughout the country should be merged into larger units. Official pronouncements on this subject took the line that the smaller collective farms were economically weak. They were not large enough to make efficient use of machinery and fertilisers, to apply the findings of scientific research to the fields, and to utilise the services of highly-skilled specialists. Consequently crop yields were low, the farmers got correspondingly low incomes, there were no funds out of which libraries, clubs, children's nurseries and other 'cultural' services could be provided. Officially inspired articles in economic and other journals poured scorn on the old-fashioned Russian village, with its huddle of little houses, badly built, dark, insanitary. How much better, they said, it would be under the new policy, when the smaller farms of only a few hundred hectares were merged into large efficient units of thousands of hectares, when the old villages were wiped out and replaced by splendid new *agro-gorods* or rural towns. To these settlements they were going to send the peasants who were displaced by the more extensive mechanisation and greater efficiency of the larger units, and there they would work as hired hands in the canneries, stockyards and processing works to be set up in connection with the enlarged farms.

All year reports coming in from different parts of the country, the Moscow province, the Ukraine and elsewhere, show that this policy is in full swing. So far, most of the work involved in the transfer seems to have fallen on members of the local Communist Party bodies, who, along with managers of collective farms, have had to undertake all the arduous preparatory work. Later on, in the spring of 1951, the actual work of building the new rural settlements is to begin, and this will be a complicated and laborious task which will fall largely on the collective farmers themselves. Each farm will be required to set up a permanent building brigade, and to train workers with the necessary skills to man it. Local building materials will have to be collected, workshops set up, qualified builders and architects brought together. Thousands of workers will be needed, and it is expected that they will be drawn from the army of workers rendered surplus by the new large-scale methods.

### Ruthless Change

The scope of this intensification of collective farming is bound to be great, because in many parts of the country small collective farms have formed a third or more of the total number of farms. The official arguments in favour of this development are, of course, perfectly reasonable from the official point of view. It is true that larger farming units may be expected to function with greater economy and efficiency, and that the resulting higher crop yields will be of great benefit to the country as a whole, including the peasants. But one cannot help feeling that the process of change, rapid and ruthless as it is, must be intensely painful, at least to some of the 'changees'. Many Russian villages undoubtedly are as dark and insanitary as official propaganda declares them to be. But to the people who live in them they represent not only homes, but also a way of life, rooted deeply in their own lives, and in the lives of many generations of their predecessors. The new settlements—when they are built—will have to be very splendid to provide adequate compensation.

Apart from satisfying the Soviet Government's endless hunger for higher and more stable returns from agriculture, and making it easier to put the great afforestation plan into effect, an openly-declared aim of this new agricultural policy is to make the peasant over into quite a different kind of human being, an agricultural worker, on a par with the industrial worker. The present leaders of Russia have never trusted the peasant, never believed him to be good revolutionary material. And so he must be changed, for fear that his reactionary individualistic

tendencies will get the upper hand, and he will try to 'roll back the wheel of history' in the words of the Communist Manifesto.

Seen in this light, the 1935 compromise was merely a stepping-stone, a breathing space to give the Government time to establish the structure of the collective system, to give it a body so to speak, and to prepare for the next step forward, which is nothing less than to provide it with a new soul. The rulers of Russia are confident men, firm in their belief that they can do all these tremendous things, bend the laws of economics to their will, rectify nature, remake man himself. Indeed, they think that they must do them, in order to establish the kind of society in which they believe, and without which they themselves are convinced that their country cannot be secure. But it cannot be supposed that the process of remoulding the lives of more than half of their 200,000,000 population is something that can be easily or quickly accomplished. The peasant's former way of life has endured for centuries, while

collectivisation has been fully established for not more than fifteen years.

Until the issue is decided, this deep conflict between the small autocratic ruling group and the vast uncomprehending mass of the ruled will continue, as it has done for so long. To students of Russia's history this is an all-too-familiar story. Ever since the emergence of the Russian State from the Mongolian domination, successive rulers have bound ever-increasing burdens on the backs of the peasants, always in the conviction that it was essential for the safety of the realm that this should be done. The peasant's underlying resentment has expressed itself from time to time in savage but formless revolts, which sometimes came near to overthrowing the established authority, but which never resulted in any perceptible improvement in the peasant's lot. Thus Russia is, in a very profound sense, at war with herself, and cannot be expected to know how to be at peace with the rest of the world.

—Third Programme

## Having No Frontiers

By PETER FLEMING

**I**N these islands you still sometimes hear men—less frequently women—talking about 'the Frontier'. But what they are talking about is the North-West Frontier of India, and the chances are a hundred to one that they are soldiers or possibly airmen who once did a tour of duty in that curiously attractive region. Except for Japan, we are, I think, the only country of any consequence which has not got a land frontier of its own; and because frontiers, like all kinds of boundaries between human beings, must by the very fact of their existence have some psychological impact on the people behind them, I think it is worth speculating, in an amateurish way, on what sort of effect our frontierless condition tends to have on us, and, conversely, on how a completely opposite state of affairs may influence a people, like the Russians, with a very long land frontier.

Why must, and how does, the possession of a frontier affect a nation's outlook? Let us reduce the problem to a lower level and see how it affects the individual. A good many of us have gardens, some of us are farmers, and there is still a small, hard-pressed rearguard of landowners. However big or small your holding is, it has at one time or another aroused in you a variety of emotions—hope, and pride, and disappointment, and so on. But the chances are that far the strongest of those emotions had their origin in something to do with your boundary, your frontier. You all, I am sure, hold your neighbours in the highest esteem; but when their chickens infiltrate into your garden or their cows spend a night in your corn, because they don't keep their boundary fences up properly, don't tell me that you are not filled with an often quite disproportionate anger. There does seem to reside in the human animal some very deep instinct which makes him peculiarly jealous, in the Biblical sense of the word, about anything to do with boundaries, especially when—as is almost always the case—he shares those boundaries with a neighbour: in other words, if they are land boundaries.

If he does not share them with a neighbour, he is much less touchy about them. Take the case of a farmer whose land runs right down to a river. Sooner or later, either because the wash from pleasure-launches undermines a bit of the bank or from some other cause, two or three square feet of the farmer's land fall with a plop into the river and disappear. The farmer may be mildly annoyed when he notices this, but he would be very much more than mildly annoyed if he found that one of his neighbours, in putting up a new fence, had encroached on his land, with a corner post say, to the same trifling extent that the river has. He knows that the square yard of pasture which has fallen into the river is lost for good; but he knows that his neighbour will either have to restore the other square yard to him or else compensate him with a quit-rent or something of the kind. Yet although it is quite irrational, I am sure that his emotional response in the second case is far stronger than it is in the first.

In the last fifty years we have lost perhaps twenty square miles of our native land by coastal erosion; it has simply fallen into the sea. Twenty square miles is not—even for a small country—an awful lot of territory to lose; but try to imagine what would have happened, how

we should have felt about it, if those twenty square miles had been sequestered, not by the impersonal ocean, but by a neighbouring power. Supposing you needed some sort of visa to visit Land's End, the approaches to which were barred by those striped barriers like barbers' poles which mark so many frontiers, and guarded by sentries in a foreign uniform, and disfigured by peremptory notices in an alien language? You would then, I think, feel very differently about those twenty square miles, whose loss you were possibly unaware of until I mentioned it just now. You would feel more the way the Chinese are apt to feel about Hongkong, or the Spaniards about Gibraltar.

Apart from the emotional responses which land frontiers and anything to do with them are so quick to arouse, countries which have them are uncomfortably, though perhaps only half-consciously, aware of a contradiction between what, in a time of crisis, they want their frontiers to be and what they know they are in practice. They want their frontiers to be sacred, inviolable, secure; but their own and other people's history teaches them that their frontiers are nothing of the kind. Frontiers, though spoken of exclusively as things to be defended, are never, or almost never, defended with success. However high the mountains, however wide the river, however impregnable the local Maginot Line, everybody knows in his heart of hearts that in war—or anyhow in the first round of a war—the only thing to do with a frontier is to attack across it.

In times of peace, too, a land frontier breeds in a small way a feeling of insecurity. Though it may be what is called a 'natural' frontier, like a river or a watershed, though on the map it may have an air of finality and precision, you find when you get there that everything is surprisingly blurred and equivocal. Suppose you are recrossing from Redland into Blueland. In the treaty which, years ago, established the frontier—and which incidentally is still regarded in both countries as an instrument not less impractical than unjust—the politicians did their best to insulate the two nations from each other. But now many Bluelanders go every day to work in factories in Redland, Redlanders come across in the summer to pasture their flocks in Blueland, and all along the frontier, on both sides of it, you find a hybrid, bilingual population—a zone of grey just where, theoretically, there should be only black and white. An Englishman setting out for France would think it surprising, unnatural and at first rather shocking if he found that half the inhabitants of Dover were French and that the municipal supplies of water and electricity came from Calais; but that is the sort of thing he would find if we had the ordinary sort of frontier.

Lately a good many people have been worrying about our security arrangements in this country. I have no idea by how much, if at all, these arrangements fall short of perfection. I only want to suggest that arrangements to prevent the wrong people either entering or leaving this country are very much easier to make than if we had a land frontier. You sometimes read in the paper that ports and airfields are being watched for a wanted man, and it may occur to you that this must mean extra work for police and other officials. Probably it

does; but nothing like as much extra work as if they had also to watch even such relatively short land frontiers as the Scottish and Welsh borders.

I think I have said enough to suggest that a land frontier is an institution which simultaneously arouses in its owners a fierce, jealous, possessive pride and a weaker but perhaps rather more rational feeling of anxiety: a line that in war will theoretically be defended at all costs but is practically never defended with success: a source of disputes, a home of mongrels, a long perimeter on the never wholly effective control of which even in peace time much money and effort must be spent. I conclude that we are lucky not to have a frontier. As I see it, the only thing we lose by our lack of one is the ability to gauge the effect which land frontiers are apt to have on the outlook of those who live behind them. This is a failing which perhaps the Americans share too, for their northern and southern frontiers are not charged with the same political and strategic—or for that matter emotional—implications as are, for instance, the frontiers of France or Greece; and in many ways, therefore, their outlook is that of a very large island.

I sometimes wonder whether this insularity does not increase the already formidable difficulties of understanding the Russians—or of trying to begin to understand them. In the matter of frontiers, Russia is exactly the opposite to us, for she has the longest land frontier in the world. She shares a boundary with nine or ten different neighbours something like 10,000 miles long, and if frontiers do have an influence on national character, you would expect to find traces of that influence in the Russians.

Well, do you? When you used to be allowed to go there, you discovered when you applied for a visa that you had to specify not only the place at which you were going to enter the country but also the place at which you were going to leave it; and I have sad memories of a rainy afternoon on the Vladivostok docks when my luggage was taken off a Japanese steamer bound for what is now called Pusan because somebody had made a mistake and my passport only authorised me to leave Russia by the Polish frontier—several thousand miles away. It is only a small thing, of course, and it arose partly from the fact that in Russia, as in all police-states, the frontier is an institution with a dual purpose, like the fence round a deer-park; not only has the rest of

the world got to be kept out, but the Russians have got to be kept in. It is a point that does not arise in this country.

The Russians seem to us to talk a tremendous lot of nonsense, and perhaps one of the things we find hardest to understand is the terrific conviction with which they go on talking about the urgent need to protect the Soviet fatherland against imperialist aggression. No doubt they are worried about the atom bomb. So are we, and with more cause, really, because it can hurt us more decisively than it can hurt them. But why must they always get in such a state? There they are, 200,000,000 people inhabiting one-sixth of the earth's land surface, with a screen of satellite states covering their western flank. Why this pathological distrust of all their neighbours? Why an army of 175 divisions or whatever it is? Why the chronic tension and the bellicose peace campaigns? The obvious answer is that this is the technique of revolutionary imperialism, that all this myth about the rest of the world plotting the downfall of the Soviet Union is a tissue of cynical hypocrisies, a clumsy, prefabricated bluff—like the Nazis wailing about encirclement—intended to disguise the fact that the Soviet Union is plotting the downfall of the rest of the world. By plotting the downfall, I do not mean merely fomenting world revolution; I mean launching a war of aggression.

The obvious answer may be the right answer. It often is. The whole apparatus for making it the right answer is in being—the huge armies, the perverted and ignorant nationalism, the unquestioned myth that the outside world is hostile; and nobody can say with certainty that the apparatus will not be used. All I want to suggest is that one of the reasons for the existence of that apparatus may be, ultimately, in the outlook engendered by the long land frontiers of Russia, by those thousands of miles of forests and mountains, desert and steppes, by that vast perimeter which looks so menacing from the outside, so vulnerable from within. I may be wrong about this; and even if I am right those frontiers explain only part, and excuse none, of the attitudes which Russia feels called upon to strike. But all clues to any mystery are worth considering; and next summer holidays, when you go down to the nearest approach to a frontier that Great Britain has got and watch the children paddling in the sea, you may perhaps reflect that, though insularity is a source of many shortcomings, it might not be a bad thing if everybody lived on islands.—*Home Service*

## Racial Problems in the Commonwealth

(continued from page 124)

new system of representation of minorities, as such and as equals, both in legislature and in executive; together with a form of independent chairmanship designed to assist agreement and prevent obstruction, rather than to diminish responsibility or override self-government.

That brings me back to the second proviso suggested for applying the Commonwealth idea to racial-group relations—namely, that there should be some outside authority to guide and, if necessary, to decide, where the method of conference among equals fails. It is a point of great importance that within the Commonwealth, and by virtue of the great respect enjoyed by British leadership, exercised in the name of the Crown, it is possible to work towards solutions which would be out of the question otherwise. This, however, is a wasting asset, which could disappear if racial frictions were allowed to grow to the point where the dissatisfied rebelled against the Commonwealth and abandoned their respect for British justice and impartiality.

In the Commonwealth we have, somewhere or other, almost every main type of racial problem: from Central Africa to Malaya; from Kenya to the West Indies. This gives room for experiment and for drawing lessons for one case from the trials, errors and successes of other cases. In making such experiments and attempting such advances, we in the Commonwealth have other great advantages. Our constitutional principles and practices, deriving from the idea of supremacy of a democratically controlled Crown, are highly flexible and adaptable. Moreover, we start with the advantage that the Commonwealth itself is today a multi-racial society, already numbering both Asian and racially European nations on a footing of full equality, and open to the accession of other member-nations of African or other races in the fullness of time. This confers upon it great prestige in the racial field. We may well reflect that if the political and economic problems of race cannot be solved peacefully in the Commonwealth they are unlikely to be solved peacefully anywhere else.

Some areas, like the Low Countries or the Middle East, seem destined by their geographical nature to be the cockpits of world war. In the world war for mastery of the minds of men, may not a similar destiny belong to race, and to areas like Africa where racial problems are largest? It is always the weakness of democracies in regard to war that they leave their preparations until too late. That can be just as true in the political and ideological fields as in the military. If the Commonwealth cannot progressively set about solving its racial problems, using careful study as the basis of bold action, then racial problems are capable of destroying the Commonwealth itself.

—Third Programme

Human behaviour can be studied from at least two points of view. On the one hand we may be interested in what people *actually* do; on the other hand we may be interested in the *sorts* of things they are likely to do. The former approach requires a knowledge of physiology and a frame of reference in which the human organism is seen in its biological setting. The latter is pursued by means of such constructs as 'personality', 'traits', 'character' and the like. Mr. O. L. Zangwill, in *An Introduction to Modern Psychology* (Methuen, 5s.), is chiefly interested in the physiological aspects of human conduct, and his book is an admirable introduction to recent developments in this field. The new work on animal learning is described and there is a good account of the physiology of perception. He does not think much of the 'measurement' of intellectual ability, his account of psychoanalysis is very sketchy, and makes no reference to the 'neo-psychoanalytical schools', while the chapter on 'Problems of Personality' leaves much to be desired. These shortcomings have to be mentioned because the book is called *An Introduction to Modern Psychology*. In the compass of some 200 pages this objective could scarcely be achieved, and Mr. Zangwill has done wisely to concentrate on those aspects of psychology in which he is an expert and which are less known to the general public. Once its limitations are appreciated the book may be warmly recommended.

# The Changing Jug

PATRICK HERON on the recent work of Braque, Picasso and Matisse

**A**BOUT eighteen months ago I had the good fortune to spend a little time in Braque's studio in Paris. I remember that the first thing I was aware of as I went into the large room with its wide window facing south was a familiar black jug. This jug was floating in mid-air somewhere in front of the creamy gauze which was drawn like a transparent screen across the window. The gauze broke down the sunlight into an evenly diffused radiance or glow. Against it the potent, black jug was a startling profile, a commanding symbol. It was simply a piece of thin copper or tin sheet cut out into a jug silhouette, turning now and then on an almost invisible thread. As an image it exuded a certain startling but calm power. It had the animistic quality possessed by all Braque's images of inanimate objects—at any rate those appearing in his works since 1940.

This special aura, this quality of being alive—of the *objects* being alive—is also typical of Picasso's creations. But the jug I am talking about had a reassuring elegance and calm, to offset the disquieting aura of strange, independent life. Such calm and elegance, as well as the sense of absolute finality in a form, are things Braque does not share with his great contemporary. Picasso excels in invention, his works are like blueprints for endless new contraptions; but Braque never leaves anything at the blueprint stage; he always carries out the plan, the idea, till he arrives at the last touches, which are often touches of pure adornment. Even his simplest sketches have the rich quality of something utterly complete, utterly final and worked out: in his simplest little line drawings there is an amplitude, a sense of the idea being bodied forth with physical completeness. Braque shuns the diagrammatic, even in sketches: but Picasso often has not time to give even large paintings that elaboration of texture, that extra care and loving feeling, which would make them more than a brilliant sort of shorthand. Picasso states the bare bones; Braque puts flesh on the skeleton and clothes on the flesh.

Braque himself was in the studio when I was shown in: but I was aware of this floating jug, and of the two large canvases, on two easels side by side, before I noticed their author. It has since struck me that this was what I might have expected: it was certainly as it should have been, because Braque extols jugs more than human beings. In a typical Braque interior the girl sitting among the uprights of easels, nursing a guitar as tenderly as a baby, is only one more object, though an exciting one, among other objects. Indeed human beings appear in his works on more or less equal terms with pianos, climbing indoor plants, or garden chairs of ornate ironwork. He is the greatest living master of still life. But this is because his still life objects are far from being still, or dead: *nature vivante* would be a better title for many of them than *nature morte*; for, as I say, he animates the inanimate, he gives a living presence, an almost hypnotic personality, to everything—to an ugly old vase or a potted fern, to a jug sprouting with brushes instead of flowers, to two black fish on a grey kitchen plate, or a washstand with an enigmatic sponge and hairbrush patiently waiting beside a placid basin.

Now let me try and contrast the sort of animism which we find in Picasso's still life with the kind we sense in Braque's. Picasso is certainly the only painter who compares at all with Braque in this business of animating the inanimate. No one can doubt after seeing Picasso's still lifes at the famous exhibition in London in 1945, or, even more, those exhibited in Paris in 1949, that Picasso, too, can extract significance from almost any object, however dead or commonplace. He awakens the dull, static furniture by which we are surrounded in our daily lives, and makes it dance and perform as potently as an African war mask performs: a coffee pot gesticulates—or makes advances to a jug; a meat safe nods or winks from the wall; a mirror closes its eyes or goes blank and expressionless like deep water; flowers wave their petal fingers; the coffee grinder, squatting on the kitchen shelf, pretends to be Picasso's pet owl; a candle or an unlit lamp pines away in the heat of a Provençal afternoon in the company of huge unsympathetic poppies.

Picasso, you will observe, imposes his own will, his own fantasy, upon the world of domestic furniture. He uses everything for his own purpose exclusively. Palm trees, cacti, goats, centaurs or marigolds in a jar—all are blown sideways and sucked up in the great whirlwind of the Picassian dream.

Braque also invests objects with life, as I have already said. But by a process quite the opposite of Picasso's. Braque does not guy objects or persons; he enhances them. He is infinitely kind to all the things that go into his pictures. Indeed the kind of life which he bestows on his coffee-pot or coffee-grinder, his table, his chair and window, is just the sort of life we feel these things are really living! The personality with which Braque invests his jug is something that the jug really possesses in its own right. In other

words, Braque divines the essential spirit—one might almost call it ‘the soul’—of each object that he paints. For this reason we have the feeling that a Braque jug is just as real and valid, just as much a distinct entity, as the jug that comes from the potter's wheel.

I said of Picasso's fantasy that it shows scant respect for the subjects of his pictures: sometimes it seems to reverse the roles they play in reality—so that we could almost say that Picasso's men and women become jugs and lamps, and *vice versa*. At no point does Picasso's fantasy lead one back again to its original point of departure—that is to say, to our real, natural, calm, unhallucinating, permanent surroundings. But this is precisely what Braque's imagination does do for us. As often as not Picasso's objects, no less than his creatures, are stripped of their natural quality; their real nature is ignored or violated, caricatured, to such an extent that living things are petrified, while the inanimate are invested with crazy life.

When it comes to the pictures Picasso has painted since the spring of 1948, there are quite a few changes to be found—changes of subject matter and mood as well as in the forms and colours he uses to create these things. In the latest pictures I have seen—none of which have so far been shown in London—the paint is thicker, the colour gayer, than anything he has painted since before ‘Guernica’. In these new pictures babies grab toys and scuttle across behind the bars of high



A recent photograph of Braque's studio  
Felix H. Man

chairs or a play-pen; the young wife of the artist is herself figured by means of stripy forms tumbled together like a pile of nursery picture bricks; brightest colours alternate in the stripes, and the forms are less solid, less dense, than hitherto. But they are more ideographic in their jazz-like sparkle and wit. And by this word 'ideographic' I mean, very briefly, any formal image which does not directly evoke the illusion of a solid form in space. To evoke such solidity the artist must use a plastic image. But there are other, non-plastic qualities which may be suggested by a flatter sort of image—an ideographic image; an image which we *read* rather than *feel*.

Surmounting the rough and tumble of the brightly coloured, sharp, stripy shapes which are her body and limbs, the head of the artist's wife shone out very simply and realistically from this agitated canvas. This was because it was insulated from the current that set the whole picture jangling, by a simple witty device: Picasso had drawn the charming face in a few black lines on a white ground, and this made a separate formal unit. It looked at first as though a drawing of a girl's head by Matisse done on a piece of white paper, had been pinned over the place where the head of Picasso's portrait should be. But the square white patch with the drawing in it was only the white canvas itself.

#### 'Exciting rather than Satisfying'

On the whole these late Picassos were exciting rather than satisfying; stimulating mentally but disappointing sensuously—considered, that is, as objects in themselves which should give pleasure. Picasso still blows everything sideways: in his creative haste he even seems to have become more impatient with the means of painting than ever before. I have said that these pictures were less plastic than hitherto. A writhing line was beginning to appear in them like coils of thin rope or string. But this line has been put to brilliant use in the latest canvas we have seen so far—and that, only in reproduction. It was contained in a coloured photograph of Picasso's studio at Vallauris, which was published in *Picture Post* in June last year. In this photograph the long picture on the easel is the one to look at. The subject seems to be two lovers lying on rocks by an inlet of the sea. The lines which create the wildly looping forms of this composition are white. If one knows the white sharp marble rocks that the waves at Antibes carve out into sharp concave surfaces one may begin to feel that these rocks have largely determined the shape and quality of all the formal segments in the two figures. They have also determined those in the dark rocks that fringe the top of the picture, beyond a tongue of the white swirling sea.

This excellent picture is to my mind much more of a real achievement than any canvas in the Paris exhibition. Those sixty-five pictures were little more, I remember feeling, than a translation of the drab, grey, terrifying war-time idiom into terms of gay colour. But it must be said it was rather a desperate sort of gaiety: despite all the changes the essential vision was the same as in those gaunt war-time canvases. But this long picture in the *Picture Post* photograph is new: it represents, as far as Picasso is concerned, the momentary defeat of the plastic by the ideographic. The illusion of physical space is at a minimum in the flat loopings of that white line.

To understand the transformations in the work of Braque we must go back to the first decade of the century. When, early in his career, Braque departed from the natural sequences of reality, he did so in order to create a synthesis that would give us a new and more powerful sensation of reality itself—not the illusion of reality that the old representational methods exploited, but an altogether new and direct experience of reality, as it exists outside the picture-frame in three dimensions. That is what cubism did. To begin with, early on, Braque's forms—and Picasso's for that matter—were fractured forms; they were not representational shapes that had been twisted and distorted: they were new forms welded together out of the abstract components which a cubist analysis, a cubist eye, had first extracted from nature. And these component parts with which cubist compositions were built up were usually single planes or facets. Up to 1911 these single planes dominated the cubist canvases of Braque and Picasso at the expense of the objects in their pictures. As separate images the objects tended to disintegrate and melt away into the over-all rhythms of an abstract composition. In this way the identity of each object was partially—though not wholly—obscured by the rising sea of liberated planes.

Now during this period of analytical cubism what I have called the personality of an object was of less interest to Braque than that object's structural, its purely formal qualities. However, as far back as 1912 the tide turned, and from then on the object began to impose itself once more on these abstract, compositional forces which had almost

succeeded in subjugating it. From then on the kind of rhythm, the kind of form that Braque employed owed its character to the kind of object he was depicting. Thus, subject-matter and the poetry that springs from it were reintroduced into painting at the very point when it was generally assumed that they had been expelled for ever. And this is the state of affairs that has prevailed ever since: the jug has gained continuously in personality and importance.

In the history of the jug Matisse has played a very different part from Braque and Picasso. Where Matisse is supreme is in the realms of colour. Matisse creates his objects more in terms of colour than form. His extraordinarily fluent line re-creates the subject-matter of his pictures in terms of a stretched or compressed naturalistic imagery. The jug has a more or less naturalistic profile. But where the creative force is so tremendous is in the flat colour by which he fills these profiles. The jug may be flat ultramarine, from lip to foot, with no tonal variations. The table top may be burning orange, the wall behind jet black, the window-square filled out in violet with a white line tracing some leafy outdoor foliage. From the jug a fountain of large viridian green blobs and dashes surmounted by some larger lemon-yellow discs will indicate flowers. In all this Matisse's principal and brilliant contribution to the modern imagery of the still life is obviously by way of colour.

All through his career Matisse has preserved the illusion of naturalistic space. He never cuts jugs or faces in half for reasons of pictorial structure. Braque did. But in the five or six years after 1940 Braque abandoned a whole vocabulary of form. Suddenly tables, chairs, washstands, grand pianos, walls and windows, jugs and plant-pots, coke stoves and sideboards—all these began to appear unfractured by the cubist jigsaw surfaces. But now the top of a table would be created as one sheet of blue or black or khaki. True it would veer up into a semi-vertical position, that is, till it is in a position more nearly parallel to the picture surface. But what we might call the up-ending of all receding planes such as table tops or walls, is a constant feature in cubist as well as in fauve painting. If the table-top is shown up-ended in this way it will offer more resistance to the eye. Also such planes can be related more emphatically to the picture surface than diminishing ones. Whenever the picture surface is as important as it is in painting today, we find this tendency to swivel receding planes round into a position in which they confront the spectator with a wider expanse than in normal diminishing perspective. Piero della Francesca does this with all his receding forms. He also flattens the near surfaces of rotund objects: and who is nearer to us at present than Piero?

#### Complicated Composition

In his latest phase, however, Braque's composition has become more complicated once again, but in a new way. In the two unfinished paintings on his easel which I saw when I was in his studio, the objects are the objects of the studio itself: easels, palettes, a bust, a huge vase, a little lamp and, behind the uprights of easels, a huge silvery hinge with three fingers or brackets on the right and one on the left. This hinge, rather like the hinge of a safe or oven, is floating through the air amongst the angular but very realistic silhouettes of studio gadgets and paraphernalia. Indeed its outline is seen through their outlines, much as a large bird in slow flight appears to pass through intervening treetops. But, of course, this whiteish hinge is a bird! Couldn't it be the 'Dove of Peace'? I asked him. 'Naturally', he replied. 'Isn't Peace a universal preoccupation now?'

Braque has done several large versions of this picture: they are called 'The Studio, 1', or 2 or 3: and he painted them at the same time, indeed almost simultaneously, moving from one easel to another, and even a third, all within a few minutes. One version may be seen in the present Exhibition of modern French paintings at Burlington House. The complexity of these canvases is one of interlocking but more or less realistic outlines in white or pale grey on a dark brown. Often each object consists solely of these linear outlines filled in with a single plane of dark colour. The plastic element, which had always depended upon a contrast of planes, might thus have been lost. But Braque, though he is like Picasso in having become more ideographic, has not sacrificed the plastic quality in the least. In these new wraith-like jugs and easels, which we sometimes see clean through, he has combined weight and density with a sort of ideographic essence. I must say that I think these later works represent the greatest achievement in painting since the war. Quietness, slowness, and patience, and an exceedingly contemplative and profound approach seem to me to place Braque above the almost too rapid Picasso of the present decade.

—Third Programme

# The Romantic Movement in Europe

By H. G. SCHENK

**R**OMANTICISM was the last European-wide spiritual and intellectual movement. Far from being confined to literature, it manifested itself also, in varying degrees, in music and the arts, historiography and social thought, and in man's general outlook on life in this world and the next. It had a spell of about fifty years, but after about 1840, and certainly after the middle of the century, romanticism came to be replaced by a host of other movements, less profound or less universal, although some of them, as for example symbolism, continued to be strongly influenced by romantic concepts. Thus we can now look back on the romantic movement from the distance of a century.

## History of Ideas

Synoptic studies, though few in number, are not lacking altogether. Already in the eighteen-seventies that great Danish scholar Georg Brandes attempted something of this kind in his *Main Currents in Nineteenth-century Literature*. In 1900, T. S. Omond used an even wider canvas for his book *The Romantic Triumph*, and three years ago a comprehensive work on romanticism, written by the French scholar Paul van Tieghem, was published posthumously under the title *Le Romantisme dans la Littérature Européenne*. Van Tieghem's approach was largely that of the historian of literature, whereas my own aim is to study the history of ideas seen in the larger context of history as a whole. I believe that Chateaubriand was right when he declared on a famous occasion: 'Ideas can be and are cosmopolitan, but not style, which has a soil, a sky, and a sun all its own'.

An approach to romanticism that transcends national boundaries and specified spheres of life, can in a sense be said to derive a powerful stimulus from the attitude of many Romantics themselves. It is well known that the state of knowledge in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century was already facing a serious crisis owing to excessive specialisation. But the romantic attempts at a reintegration are often forgotten. In Germany, Novalis' bold plan for an encyclopaedia which, unlike the *Grande Encyclopédie* of the rationalist philosophers would not exclude or minimise religious and metaphysical problems, was as remarkable as Coleridge's repeated attempts to bring all knowledge into harmony.

The fact that the romantic movement did not get under way until the very last years of the eighteenth century may suggest that the French Revolution acted as the immediate challenge that helped to provoke it. Lest I be misunderstood I ought to mention at this point that I do not mean to deny the autonomy of the human mind. The events of the French Revolution and its aftermath impressed contemporaries in many different ways; their reactions were never wholly determined by political or social happenings, however momentous. Nor is it possible to attach the romantic response, or any single manifestation of it, to a particular stratum of society. It could be shown, if indeed proof were needed, that the social composition of the Romantics was extremely varied and certainly does not warrant a merely sociological interpretation of the romantic movement. To return to my main argument: all that was done in the name of the French Revolution could either be interpreted as a vindication of the idea of secular progress, as the first or even decisive step towards the establishment of an earthly paradise, or else it could be concluded that man had failed this first test of its kind, and that the chances were that he would always fail. It was this last alternative which the Romantics tended to accept. To my mind the spirit of romanticism can to a large extent be understood in terms of a deep disillusionment which contrasts so strongly with the eighteenth-century secular expectation of an unlimited man-made progress towards ever-increasing happiness in this world. Part of my work, therefore, consists in tracing the reaction of the Romantics to the French Revolution—a problem which hitherto has never been tackled on a European scale, though more restricted studies, such as Professor Brinton's *The Political Ideas of the English Romanticists*, have proved stimulating.

The reasons for romantic disenchantment were manifold. It soon

became apparent that the new set of rulers who owed their rise to the French Revolution were not better men than those whom they had overthrown. As for the corrupting effect of power, it had been demonstrated too vividly to escape the notice of sensitive observers. The earlier hope that the Revolution would usher in an age of federalism and decentralisation had also proved an illusion. On the contrary, it was anxiously observed that the power of modern Leviathan increased steadily, and with it the power of the modern state bureaucracy, to which Romantics like the German Hoffmann, himself an official but, alas, many other things besides, were vehemently opposed. Strong individualistic tendencies which characterised early romanticism, especially in Germany, can in part be explained as a reaction against political centralisation, though admittedly many other factors contributed to it.

As a social historian I am of course greatly interested in the question of how the Romantics reacted to that other major challenge of modern times, the Industrial Revolution. In general it can be said that technical progress was watched by some Romantics with indifference, by others not without dismay. Often the romantic sense of beauty was offended by the hideousness of the newly arisen industrial districts. In England Robert Southey, in his *Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society*, published in 1829, anticipated much of Ruskin's and William Morris' later campaign against the deformity of our mechanised world. Others feared that the balance between agriculture and industry might one day be irrevocably upset, an apprehension voiced notably by the great Genevan economist Sismondi and the German Adam Müller. We would do less than justice to these Romantics if we saw in them nothing but eulogists of a bygone age with a naive hankering after the more traditional forms of economy. Their emphasis upon agriculture and a contented agrarian population as the only healthy basis of society still deserves to be taken to heart, especially in England which has travelled so far along the problematic road away from the land.

## The Social Question

If we tried to grasp the deeper meaning of the romantic attitude in this respect we would I think discover that they recoiled from the artificiality of modern urbanised life, the repercussions of which, we now begin to feel, can hardly be overestimated. More important still, Sismondi and other Romantics who gave a great deal of thought to economic problems—Coleridge is a good example—refused to study the economic sphere in isolation from politics and ethics. Indeed, it is not generally realised that Sismondi, Coleridge, and other romantic thinkers anticipated one of Karl Marx' most fundamental indictments of capitalism, namely that it transformed human beings into things. Nobody, not even Marx, could expose the hollowness of economic liberalism more nakedly than these men have done. Sismondi and the German romantic philosopher Baader, Coleridge and Adam Müller, were all aware of the fact that the proletarian in the new industrial society had only seemingly gained liberty, but had most certainly lost whatever security he had previously possessed. Consequently, it was recognised, the proletariat was the Cinderella of modern society, but it would not long be satisfied with that humble role.

It may be argued then that romanticism prepared the ground for certain Marxist doctrines; nevertheless, in other essential respects, the two movements formed totally different camps. For one thing, the Romantics, or some of them at any rate, were not unaware of the dangers of large-scale political, social, and cultural levelling which, so they feared, might lead to the vulgarisation of our culture. Besides, it could be shown that the spirit of the romantic movement struck at the very root of capitalism in a far more uncompromising way than did Marxism, a movement so obviously imbued with the spirit of materialism and eudaemonism which, to use Coleridge's definition, 'places happiness as the object and the aim of man'. Romanticism, as I see it, would have protested against such a prosaic and Philistine outlook, just as Keats and other romantic poets rebelled against the encroachment on nature's mysteries by mechanistic science.

It has rightly been said that in the romantic period the simple became an object of suspicion. As for the social and political blueprints conceived by, or in the spirit of, the *esprits simplistes* of rationalist enlightenment, they were now regarded as useless or even as repulsive. The Swedish Romantic Atterbom scoffed at 'that world-reforming abracadabra', while Coleridge in 'The Friend' refuted the idea that a constitution could be devised which would be equally suitable to China and America, or to Russia and Great Britain. And Chateaubriand, no less than Walter Scott, recoiled from the horror of a universal society that would make all nations uniform. Whereas the rationalists of the eighteenth century had emphasised the equality and interchangeability of individual human beings or groups, the Romantics laid the greatest stress upon their peculiarity, and therefore made more allowances for the right of personality. Nor did this apply only to human individuals, but also to individual communities, such as provinces or nations and, with the romantic theologian Schleiermacher, even to Christian denominations.

A study of romanticism cannot shirk the problem of romantic nationalism. On the whole I believe that the threatening standardisation of the western world—a threat brought home and accentuated by Napoleon's attempt at building a universal state—acted as a challenge to which nationalism of a defensive and culture-sustaining kind was the timely response. In our grim century we have seen the worst excesses of nationalism, and we are therefore unlikely to forget that nationalism, though defensive in its origin, gradually changed its character even during the romantic period, when it began to offer an outlet for unsatisfied religious impulses.

This leads me on to the analysis of other typically romantic substitutes for a genuine religion, such as the emphasis on the part of certain French writers on 'art for art's sake', a trend anticipated in Keats' poem 'Ode to Psyche' where poetry takes the place of religion. Romantic love, too, could at times fulfil the same function, as the most penetrating study of German romanticism, Professor Kerff's *Geist der Goethezeit* has shown so well. Indeed, even the romantic longing for the past to which European historiographers owed such a great stimulus, could I believe sometimes be interpreted in these terms. At other times, however, the enchantment of the past was no doubt the outcome of romantic pessimism with regard to the future. In this connection, again, one must admit that the Romantics did indeed have an astonishing presentiment of things to come. It is not generally realised that forebodings of an impending collapse of our civilisation were shared by romantic thinkers rooted in such different backgrounds as, for example, the German Hölderlin, the half-Scot Byron, the Frenchman La Mennais, the Polish émigré Krasinski, and the Italian Leopardi.

Yet we must beware of over-simplifying the issue. Romantic pessimism and *Weltschmerz* were highly complex phenomena. It seems to me

that the unrelieved pessimism of thinkers such as Leopardi and Schopenhauer was of an extreme kind, because they abandoned Christianity and thereby deprived themselves of that strongest and most lasting source of hope for ultimate bliss. Together with Christian faith and Christian charity they had given up Christian hope, and yet they felt equally repelled by the new-fangled hope of indefinite secular progress. Other Romantics, no longer dazzled by Rousseau's modernised version of the Pelagian heresy, reverted to the traditional Christian pessimism with regard to human nature and the age-old Christian 'suspicion of the world'.

Between those two groups there were those whose pessimism was based on a half-conscious feeling of frustration. They sensed that the only salvation lay in a return to religion, but equally felt their inability or lack of determination to follow that road. Why this should have been so is perhaps the crucial problem with which I am confronted. At the same time it is a problem which has not yet received the attention it deserves. Whereas, for example, there exists at least one comparative study of romantic enchantments, namely Mr. F. L. Lucas' *Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal*, the problem of the romantic attitude towards Christianity has to my knowledge not yet been tackled on a large enough scale. In approaching this question I have derived considerable encouragement from the remark Mr. T. S. Eliot has made in an essay on 'Religion and Literature' where he asserts that literary criticism should be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and theological standpoint. Again, many Romantics would have agreed with this postulate, for they felt that art in general and poetry in particular had to have a basis in philosophy and an anchor in religion. Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel, the two most important figures of German romanticism, were no less convinced of this necessity than were Coleridge and Wordsworth. Nor was this conviction confined to poets and writers; romantic painters such as Overbeck, Cornelius, and the brothers Olivier sought to rebuild the bridge between art and religion which had been all but destroyed in the eighteenth century.

Is there or can there be an abstract, clear-cut definition of romanticism? Kierkegaard's answer was 'No'—and in my view he was right. Nevertheless, closer study reveals that the experts in each European country are more or less agreed on the question as to which of their poets, artists, and thinkers were representative of the movement as a whole. Obviously the historian would not expect each characteristic feature to be found in every single Romantic: Schopenhauer's disdain for the Middle Ages is not sufficient evidence to disqualify him as a typical romantic philosopher. Also, one must be prepared to detect slight and even more considerable variations of each *leit-motiv* as it affected romanticism in different countries. Yet it is my conviction that there exists a main theme and thus my concern is to trace the unity of the movement without disregarding its complexity.—*Third Programme*

## What Are 'Flying Saucers'?

I—By JAMES PATON\*

DURING the war when our skies were being scanned continuously by trained observers, reports of a mysterious object in the sky came in from various centres. It appeared at a great height regularly on clear days and travelled slowly across the sky. Fighters were sent up, but failed to intercept it. Eventually the astronomers heard of it and asked for reports of its position and track. It turned out to be the planet Venus. Venus can be seen under suitable conditions in broad daylight by the naked eye. But usually one never sees it until it is pointed out. Then it becomes as familiar to you as the sun. But if it happens that you first come across it by chance, as did the war-time observers, it is naturally taken to be some terrestrial object, high up in the atmosphere.

Unless we have some special interest in astronomy or meteorology, few of us look much at the sky, except perhaps when there is a threat of rain or a particularly lovely sunset. But when something quite unusually striking appears, like a blue sun or moon, or a fire ball, great interest and speculation are naturally aroused. Just a few weeks ago, what was quite certainly a fire ball, seen over southern England, was described as a flying saucer. The fire ball is a kind of meteor. The ordinary familiar meteor that we see as a 'shooting star' in the night

sky is a tiny fragment of stone that plunges from space into our atmosphere at tremendous speed. Friction with the air makes it white hot. The streak that we see in the sky is the trail of glowing material that it leaves in its wake. It finally disappears when it is completely vaporised. But sometimes the fragment may be much bigger than a mere speck, and so encounters very great friction. Its surface gets so hot that it blazes up to become brighter even than Venus. When that happens it can be seen in the daytime. It may even burst into fragments with a loud crack.

I have just been looking through a large collection of observations of these fire balls seen from Edinburgh during the last two centuries. This is how one is described: 'At midday, there passed across the sky a brightly luminous meteor, larger than the apparent magnitude of the sun and of an elliptic shape'. And yet another: 'The apparent size and shape of the fire ball were those of a large tun or hogshead. It had stripes or bands of bright light along its sides which continued a short way beyond the ball and formed a sort of fringed tail'. That one appeared on August 28, 1810. Had it been seen today, it could hardly have escaped being a flying saucer! So you can be pretty sure that some flying saucers are similar observations misinterpreted.

But it is quite certain that many of the accounts of saucers refer to real objects, sent by man from the earth's surface, quite harmless

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objects—balloons, in fact. At every weather station in every country, balloons filled with hydrogen are released at regular intervals every day. They rise about five hundred feet a minute and drift with the wind. In fact, they are used to get the wind speed and direction at different heights in the atmosphere. Normally they rise to a great height, where they usually burst, but some of them develop leaks and fall slowly back to earth. In a stiff breeze, they pass quickly overhead. When observed in bright sunshine, you see only the side of the balloon next the sun—the shiny surface reflects the light strongly. The balloon looks like a crescent moon—just like a saucer!

In addition to these 'Met' balloons very large balloons are also used by research workers at various laboratories to carry instruments high into the stratosphere. It is significant that reports of flying saucers over Britain regularly appear shortly after these balloons are released, and come from places over which they are likely to have drifted. On one occasion not long ago when three balloons were linked in tandem to raise a particularly heavy recording instrument, there followed a story of saucers, a flock of three of them, flying in formation!

I think that real objects must certainly account for some of the reports of flying saucers.

## II—By W. D. WRIGHT\*

FIRST OF ALL; let me make it quite clear I have not yet had the good fortune to see a flying saucer, neither have I had the opportunity to cross-examine anyone who has. But my guess is that some people who quite genuinely believe they have seen something flying across the sky, were really deceived by their eyes. This might happen in at least two or three different ways.

Suppose, for example, you gaze steadily at a bright light for a few moments, say the electric light bulb in your room. When you look away, and especially if you look at a uniform area like the ceiling, you will see what is called an after-image, and this will jump from one point to another as your eye wanders across the ceiling. The after-image may persist for only a few seconds, or it may possibly last for some minutes, depending on the brightness of the light and the length of time you had been gazing at it. What has happened is that the part of the retina on which the light has been focused, loses some of its sensitivity, and the after-image develops as the retina returns to normal. This is rather analogous to what happens when someone pinches your arm: it takes a few moments, or longer, for the impression to disappear, depending on how hard you have been pinched. The sun itself can produce a very marked after-image, although it is usually so glaring that we can hardly gaze at it for more than a fraction of a second. Indeed, if we look at it for much longer, we may risk some damage to the retina. But even a casual glance at the sky near to the sun may be sufficient to record several separate after-images, which may appear, especially after a blink, as a conglomeration of discs. Anyone with a vivid imagination and unaware of what can go on in the eye, might well believe they had observed some very remarkable apparition.

Another way in which the eye may deceive us is through shadows cast on the retina by obstructions within the eye itself. When rays of light enter the eye, they have to pass through about an inch of transparent matter before they strike the retina. If there were any opacities in the eye—and they are by no means uncommon—then they might show up as small spots or perhaps something like a string of beads, projected on to the field of view. Most of us have these 'floaters', as they are called, though normally we are so used to them we do not notice they are there.

Of course, you yourself may not have any of these opacities, but there is one type of obstruction which we all have and which, under the proper conditions, can be seen fairly easily. If you stare steadily for a minute or so at an evenly illuminated patch of sky you suddenly become aware of a number of small round objects zig-zagging about. These are the blood corpuscles which pulse through the blood vessels across the retina. Their shadows are very sharp when the eye pupil is small, but they are best seen in violet light because it happens that blood has a very heavy absorption band at the violet end of the spectrum. Their appearance is then quite startling, and they look for all the world like a large number of tiny tadpoles swimming about. I can well believe that their curious appearance when seen against a deep blue sky might cause some imaginative person to jump to wrong conclusions.

I have seen these corpuscles demonstrated very vividly at scientific

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societies and on at least one occasion they were labelled 'flying saucers'. It would be foolish to suggest that all flying saucers are blood corpuscles—indeed from what Paton has told us, this is definitely not the case—but perhaps a warning against making this particular mistake may not be out of place.

## III—By GEORGE EDWARDS†

MY JOB, I SUPPOSE, is to show whether anything like a saucer really can fly. If these things have, in fact, been real, then they were either made on this planet or on another world.

For a start, let us see how near to a flying saucer a mere earth-bound aircraft designer might be expected to get. An aeroplane with disc-shaped wings is nothing new. A German version flew as long ago as 1910. A series of similar British types followed from 1911 onwards, and in 1914 a monoplane having a circular wing with a large hole in the middle earned the title of the Flying Doughnut and flew quite successfully. After this wings settled down to a reasonably standardised shape in which the span was large in relation to the width. With the advent of aircraft speeds approaching the speed of sound, the aerodynamicist has replaced the slenderness of the medium-speed wing by a more stumpy shape such as the delta or triangular wing, or even a square. This goes for guided missiles too. They, like the last war V2, travel at speeds a great deal faster than sound.

It is no great step from triangles and squares to circles, and I am quite certain that a pretty good high-speed aeroplane or missile could be designed with a disc-shaped wing, so I do not think that there is any difficulty there. I do think, however, that the size and speed at which they could work would be a bit less ambitious than that claimed for some of this aerial crockery. A small missile a few feet in diameter might do 2,000 or 3,000 miles per hour; a large aeroplane, say a hundred feet in diameter, might do 600 or 700 miles per hour, but I know of no power plant capable of making the hundred-foot aeroplane do 2,000 or 3,000, let alone 18,000 miles per hour, which has been claimed.

So far as 'the visitor from another world' theory is concerned, I think the only useful thing there is to look at the way in which we are likely to make our first interplanetary flights. If we wanted to leave this earth on an interplanetary voyage, or if we were visitors from Venus, say, on our way back home, then our present ideas of a space ship would look very much like a large V2 rocket. The power available to us to drive such a ship would make the pointed cigar shape essential in order to get through the earth's atmosphere and away from its gravitational field. We just could not make a saucer come down to within a few hundred feet, silently fly around, and then shoot back again into space, but what I am pretty sure we shall do, maybe within the next fifty years, is to get one of our rockets away from the earth. This could be made to circle the earth like a second moon, and would form a base for the second stage of interplanetary flight, which has been brought within measurable distance by the advent of atomic power. I must say that I think that the remaining work to be done before an unmanned interplanetary flight is made is rather less than the work between the biplanes of the first world war and the supersonic aircraft of the present day.

It seems to me then that small saucers that go pretty fast and big ones that go rather slower are perfectly feasible and may even be quite attractive propositions. The great obstacle to achieving the speeds that have been quoted for an interplanetary space ship resembling a saucer is undoubtedly the power plant. Here again, it is worth bearing in mind that if life does exist in another world then the inhabitants may know of a source of power which seems as unlikely now as atomic power seemed to us fifty years ago.

The trouble with these reports is the lack of personal experience. I do know one man who filled the front pages of the national press as having seen a saucer. Even he admitted afterwards that it was a legpull. I wonder how many of the 400 American sightings are the same.

—Home Service

A reference book for the practising planner is provided by the *Town and Country Planning Textbook*, edited by the Association for Planning and Regional Reconstruction, with an introduction by Professor W. G. Holford (Architectural Press, 42s.). This volume, the work of many experts, and illustrated with maps and plans, is the first comprehensive textbook available to students of town and country planning.

† Chief designer, Vickers-Armstrongs, Ltd., Weybridge

# NEWS DIARY

**January 17-23**

**Wednesday, January 17**

Chinese Government rejects United Nations' proposals for cease-fire in Korea and puts forward counter-proposals. Mr. Acheson states that the counter-proposals are unacceptable

General Eisenhower arrives in Rome

**Thursday, January 18**

Mr. Aneurin Bevan appointed Minister of Labour in place of Mr. George Isaacs who becomes Minister of Pensions. Health and housing to come under Mr. Marquand and Mr. Dalton respectively

President Truman states that the United States will press to have China condemned as an aggressor

Report of Broadcasting Committee under chairmanship of Lord Beveridge is published

**Friday, January 19**

Mr. Trygve Lie, U.N. Secretary-General, arrives in London

New session opens in South African Parliament

Influenza epidemic reported in Tyneside and Merseyside

**Saturday, January 20**

United States' resolution condemning Peking Government as aggressor introduced into Political Committee of U.N. General Assembly

Many killed in Swiss avalanches

Soviet Government replies to Western Notes on German rearment

**Sunday, January 21**

Asian and Arab representatives hold special meeting at Lake Success

Mr. Nehru on return to India states that in his view door has not been shut on a peaceful settlement in Korea

United Nations forces withdraw from Ichon

**Monday, January 22**

Indian delegate to the United Nations announces new proposals from the Peking Government on the subject of Korea and the Far East. Adjournment of Political Committee of General Assembly for 48 hours voted by 27 votes to 23, the United States being in the minority

Eruption of Mount Lamington causes havoc in New Guinea

Mr. Dulles leaves for Tokyo to discuss Japanese peace settlement

**Tuesday, January 23**

Parliament reassembles: Prime Minister makes statement about Korea and China

Present British coal stocks officially stated to be 1,000,000 tons and to be dangerously low

General Eisenhower returns to Paris on completion of European tour



Over 260 persons were killed in Alpine avalanches in Switzerland, Austria and Italy last week. The snowfall is said to have been the heaviest for eighty years. Passes have been cut off and some winter sports resorts made inaccessible. The photograph shows Swiss railway workers clearing snow and earth which fell in an avalanche blocking the arch of a bridge at Gurtnelly station



In the international rugby football match at Swansea last Saturday Wales beat England by 23 points to 5: an incident during play



Forest Down ewes and early lambs from Newburgh farm, Dorset. In his presidential address at the Farmers' Union Monday, Sir James Turner asked the union to record the farming industry's great responsibility at this g

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The advance of the Chinese and North Korean forces across the thirty-eighth parallel has once more caused South Korean refugees to move back in considerable numbers with the retiring allied forces. They are making use of every available form of transport in their journeys to the south of the Peninsula



The battleship *Vanguard*, wearing the flag of the Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet, for the last time, leaving for the annual spring cruise in the Mediterranean. The carrier *Indomitable* is later to wear the flag of the Commander-in-Chief

Left: fifty years ago elaborate ceremonies were held in Sydney to celebrate the coming into being of the Commonwealth of Australia. The enabling Act laid it down that the capital should be within New South Wales and not less than 100 miles from Sydney: a photograph of Sydney where (as throughout the Commonwealth) Australia Day is being celebrated tomorrow

# A Dining-room Reflection

MARTIN COOPER gives the first of three talks about food

**A**DINING-ROOM is already a rare room, an index either of comparative opulence or of a housewife whose pride in her house is greater than her distaste for cleaning one more, strictly speaking unnecessary, room. It may even be that in a generation or so the word 'dining-room' will have the same nostalgic and archaic overtones as 'still-room', 'powder-closet' or 'servants' hall', calling up images of vanished ease and patriarchal splendour. But just as it would be foolhardy to argue the irreligion of a family from the absence of a private chapel in the house which they inhabit, so the disappearance of rooms specially affected to eating is not necessarily the sign of a declining interest in food. Good meals are probably now more often eaten in the kitchen where they are cooked or in a nondescript living-room. In fact the age of the professional cook is past and we are embarked upon an era of gastronomic amateurism.

### Old Cook Writ Large

Not that our approach to food is empirical. Dieticians and statisticians, the preachers of the New Dispensation, have largely replaced the priests of the old; and the New Learning, with its emphasis on health and virtual disregard of pleasure, has in many quarters replaced the traditions, rites and whole scholastic apparatus of the old gastronomic faith. New dietician is indeed old cook writ large, with the same significant change of emphasis from works to faith. Appealing to the infallible book of science, the dietician prescribes, in theory and from the laboratory, the faith pure and undefiled which alone will lead to hygienic salvation; and holds in comparative contempt the 'good works' done in the kitchen. In vegetarians, in followers of Dr. Hay or *Rohkost* enthusiasts, we have the fanatic fringe—the Shakers, the Anabaptists, and the Fifth Monarchy Men—of the new dispensation; and in the normal practice of the British cook-housewife we have the same assertion of the spirit of compromise and private judgment which marked our reaction to the intellectual revolution of the sixteenth century and gave rise to a church as unmistakably national as our cooking.

The eating habits of a nation or a class are notoriously revealing. *Dis-moi ce que tu manges et je te dirai qui tu es* can be indefinitely elaborated, and philosophers of manners have drawn the most far-reaching conclusions from national characteristics in eating. A bottle of ketchup or a cup of strong sweet tea; a cruet of salt, pepper and mustard with a bottle of strong vinegar, and the oil bottle significantly unused; a dollop of custard—to how many millions do not these spell English eating? And it was to examine more closely the gastronomic ideals of this very large proportion of British society that I visited the British Food Fair last September. There I found a vast and impressive display of the carbohydrate faith, an apotheosis of starch in tins and packets, 'containers' and 'cartons'. The roast-beef-eating John Bull here appeared as a sweet-toothed, cake-and-pudding-hungry child. The very impact of the exhibition on the eye suggested a revolution. The profusion of pinks and yellows invited the brush of a Matisse. Jellies, jam, ice-creams, colouring mixtures and boiled sweets were patterned against the prevailing tones of custard, cake mixtures and cereals, with the darker hues of cocoa and other nutritional beverages in the background and the whole scene lit by the glint of tins and the frosted whiteness of omnipresent sugar.

### 'Chick-Chogs' and La Pompadour

I encountered a new language also, more puzzling than the strange French *koiné* of the international menus. I read of Weetanogs and Chick-Chogs, Toddlers Treat and Chiffon Custard Cups, a bewildering variety of sugar and starch flavoured with synthetic fruit-juices. But my mind was on more serious matters, for I meant to lunch in the restaurant attached to the exhibition. I found, to my surprise, that even at a British Food Fair the menu was in French, and a French of which I was by no means unqualified master. There was little choice, but I consoled myself

with the thought that the set luncheon at a Food Fair would be very good indeed. I chose in faith, for a glance at my neighbours' plates had severely dashed my hopes; and what I finally ate was grapefruit; lumps of halibut with a brown, glutinous sauce (*tronçons de flétan Duglére*) and ex-frozen vegetables; and a stale, wet brioche coated with toffee mixture and containing half a tinned peach, a confection ironically named after La Pompadour. I tried to imagine what I should have eaten at a Food Fair in any other country and, my heated fantasy soon suggesting the idea of meat, I returned to the exhibition to see if I could find any.

I found a whalemeat stall, a display of bacon-flitches, and many tins whose labels told me that they contained steak; but by now I had had my fill of tin, cardboard and the display of sweetness, and I was about to leave when my eye caught the glint of a new substance and, apathetically curious, I joined a queue, at whose end I finally beheld the goddess of the exhibition. This was not some pot-bellied god of good living but a slender and aseptic goddess of health. Lumena, for so she was called, was a polished plexiglas young woman, five foot seven in height, perfectly proportioned, perfectly naked and perfectly transparent, constructed accurately to scale and with her organs illuminated. A homely note told me that the materials used to represent her veins and arteries would stretch from Olympia to Charing Cross Station and that the lighting cable connecting the lamps inside the organs was 'six times the length of a cricket pitch'. I did not wait to see the idol manipulated by its priests or to receive an object-lesson in nutrition and digestion, but sick at heart, and with the first faint stirrings of dyspepsia already making themselves felt, I turned and went.

### No Fun at the Fair

And yet I cannot regard the British Food Fair as truly representative of anything but a reaction in our national way of eating, a violent reaction against the old popular idea that 'a little of what you fancy does you good'. The Fair exemplified the tendency to substitute the dietician for the cook; the tin, the pressure-cooker and the refrigerator for the traditional ritual implements of the kitchen; to consider hygiene (not even health) rather than sensual gratification in the preparation of food and to make what was once an applied art of the greatest complexity one of the lesser, ancillary sciences. This new attitude to food flatters the national vice of laziness; and dieticians or manufacturers of patent or tinned food, who can plead for their ideas that they are easy and require little time or trouble to execute, gain a more willing hearing from overworked and underhoused amateur cooks than they would ever have received from the old-fashioned professional. She was the Head of a Department and would have resented as much as any civil servant the suggestion that her work was not skilled, that her post was not really a whole-time one or even ultimately to be considered necessary at all.

The ritual of eating, developed to a greater splendour and complexity in this country than anywhere else in western Europe, has naturally disappeared with the development of the purely utilitarian and scientific attitudes to food. That ritual had long outlived the faith behind it, and an etiquette book of 1889 shows how far meals, at least in certain circles, were regarded as a field exercise in social taboos, how far the ritual had come to outweigh and overshadow the significance of the rite itself. There we read that 'artichokes are rather difficult to eat and English young ladies generally refuse them' and this is only a prelude to a formidable list of forbidden foods, so that 'a young lady is more or less cut off from savouries, small birds, mushrooms, certain kinds of game, cheese and liqueurs'. These abstentions were practised in honour of an earlier goddess than Lumena—the goddess of Gentility, whose cult is by no means extinct and is closely connected with eating. Newspaper quizzes still contain a shorter catechism for devotees with such questions as: How should peas and asparagus be eaten? Is fish to be eaten with fish knives and forks? What is the correct way of placing spoons, knives and forks on the table? A single slip, even a momentary hesitation, in the correct solution of such problems has

often in the past prejudiced a mother for years against a prospective daughter- or son-in-law; and there are probably still few social shibboleths which cause more heart-searchings and class-consciousness than those connected with eating.

Yet there is a profound instinct at the root of these apparently silly and trivial ritualistic fancies. To eat at a man's table has always been to share, sacramentally, in his intimate family life; it is the very essence of that hospitality which among primitive peoples obliges the host no less than the guest. If all eating is thus partly sacramental, the stranger who uses an even slightly different rite—who eats cheese, say, off the end of his knife instead of in his fingers—reveals that he is not only a stranger but a foreigner; and where the clan or class spirit is very strongly developed table manners do, in fact, still provide a fairly sure index of social position. But if eating is to be considered in future simply as a department of hygiene or as a problem of no intrinsic interest, to be solved by mechanical devices of tin and refrigerator—if, in fact, the food eaten in private houses is to be more and more mass produced in factories—can eating retain its sacramental character? Will an invitation to eat at a man's house imply any greater bond than an invitation to admire his new car or his new television set?

### The 'Snack' Habit'

It might well be thought that greed alone, the demand for the gratification of a sensual appetite, must in the end save eating as an art from the health specialists and the scientific planners. But I doubt it. There is no strong or widespread tradition of good food in England except in a few country districts; and the conditions of life in towns, physical and mental, all favour the growth of the 'snack' habit, the multiplication of what I saw advertised in one provincial town as a Snacketeria. It was, after all, an Englishman who invented that earliest form of 'snack', the sandwich, and English sensuality has never expressed itself in gastronomic inventiveness. As eaters we have been famous in the past for gluttony of the primitive sort, for the consumption of vast quantities, especially of meat; but it is significant that in order to make the distinction between the epicure and the glutton we often have recourse to the French *gourmet* and *gourmand*. Indeed the overwhelming influence of France on our whole conception of good food is in itself a proof of our poverty of invention, our lack of initiative and our virtual indifference as a nation to what we eat. We are not, in the first place, prepared to spend on food either the time or the money spent by the French. Our palates, early accustomed to the un-subtle flavours of strong tea, overboiled cabbage and custard, are too often irreparably destroyed by the adult pleasures of whisky and gin-drinking. And we are content that it should be so, bored and embarrassed by the analysis and discussion of complicated flavours and textures, by the serious approach to what a large proportion of Englishmen still regard, with boyish naivety, as 'grub'.

Nevertheless, if England were examined by the Recording Angel for her addiction to the Seven Deadly Sins she would not, I think, escape lightly under the rubric of Gluttony. In a large, and I believe increasing, number of our countrymen a typically British compromise between two religions—the religion of Gentility and the religion of Lumena, Goddess of Hygiene—is combined with a new and subtle form of greed. Gentility demands that an appetite for food should be neither gross nor easily satisfied; the appearance of a certain delicacy is essential, and aspirants to Gentility will boast of their inability to 'touch' an astonishing variety of foods. Self-consciousness about health, aggravated by newspaper articles on diet, will modify or add to this list; and so we have the paradoxical spectacle of the poorer and less educated sections of the community developing and boasting of a delicacy of the palate or stomach which stern nursery discipline and boarding-school fare have successfully cured among the richer classes. The tramp who complained of a sliver of chicken skin in the broth offered to him provided material for an anecdote in the memoirs of an older generation, but anyone who has tried to provide a meal for a charwoman or had to cater regularly for a young nanny will know that the list of foods forbidden by the etiquette-book to the young lady of 1889 is short compared with that of the foods refused by her humbler descendants because they do not 'fancy' or 'cannot touch' them. It was for these sickly or deliberately sophisticated palates that the Weetanogs and the Chick-Chogs, the cake-mixtures and the custard powders of the Food Fair were no doubt designed, for it is very rarely that farinaceous foods or sugar in any form figure among the taboos of the gastronomic *précieuses ridicules*. (Not that they are always women—a weak stomach and a delicate palate, derided at a public school, are taken more seriously lower in

the social scale.) Epicures, then, of a certain novel kind, are probably on the increase in England today. But they are connoisseurs of ice-cream and sundaes, the brands of tinned salmon or peaches, rather than of cheese or the ways of preparing vegetables or meat.

How will the eating habits of this country develop? Considerations of gentility may grow less strong but those of hygiene are probably due to increase. Meanwhile, it is a vain affectation for those who are concerned with eating as a domestic art to cultivate any form of gastronomic nationalism. Elizabethan stuffed swans and Lincolnshire ways of preparing pigs' chaps belong to the same specialist, unreal world as morris-dancing. But the presence of a large number of foreigners in England and the existence of countless cookery-books enable the interested amateur, upon whom the future depends, to experiment with recipes from most of the countries of the world. Our gastronomic salvation depends on domestic cooking, however restricted by meagre rations and lack of time and energy, not on restaurants, most of which have for years dealt in imitations of a few French dishes as pitiful as the imitations of the French language behind which they hide. France may remain the epicure's paradise and an increasing number of amateurs may spend eating-holidays there. But French food demands a profusion of ingredients which we are not likely to possess for years to come—meat, butter and cream—and very often the skill and the time of the professional. Turning to the humbler foods of Italy, Scandinavia or Central Europe, we can both enlarge our repertory and preserve the European tradition of regarding eating as an art, a sacrament of domestic life and the source of our least precarious and most innocent animal pleasures.—*Third Programme*

## Two Poems from Baudelaire

### Cats

Lovers and austere dons are equally  
(When they mature) attached to cats—  
Cats soft but cruel, emperors of flats,  
Touchy like them and like them sedentary.

Friends of the sensual, the cerebral,  
They seek the quiet and horror of the dark;  
If they had ever bent their pride to work  
They might have pulled the funeral cars of hell.

Asleep they take the noble attitude  
Of the great sphinxes that appear to brood,  
Stretched in the wastes, in dreams that have no end;

Their loins are electric with fecundities,  
And particles of gold, like finest sand,  
Star vaguely their unfathomable eyes.

### Owls

Swaddled in yews as black as ink  
The owls sit in a tidy frieze  
Like oriental deities,  
Unlidding their red eyes. They think.

They will sit on quite motionless  
Until that hour, nostalgic, dun,  
When, rolling up the slanting sun,  
Shadows reoccupy the place.

Their attitude reminds the clever  
That in our time and world one never  
Ought to seek action, or revolt;

Man shaken by a creeping shade  
Bears always in himself the guilt  
Of having wished to change his fate.

ROY FULLER

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ROBERT HALE

# Letters to the Editor

The Editor welcomes letters on broadcasting subjects or topics arising out of articles or talks printed in THE LISTENER but reserves the right to shorten letters for reasons of space

## Crisis in the Far East

Sir,—One cannot judge the reasons which prompted United Nations action in Korea by confining attention to the events covered by Sir John Pratt's letter.

Whatever may have been said in the way of bellicose talk by leaders from North or from South Korea before the invasion, one cannot disregard the fact that by crossing the 38th parallel on June 25, North Koreans tried to solve by force of arms a problem which the U.N. General Assembly and its commissions in Korea had been attempting to solve by peaceful negotiation for two and a half years. The record of that work speaks for itself and can be read in the U.N. Official Reports for 1948, 1949 and 1950.

The U.N. was asked to concern itself with the Korean question in 1947 because the two major powers most directly concerned, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., had been unable to agree the ways and means for arranging national elections as a step towards Korean independence. It would have been no solution to leave Korea's future as a unified country lying frustrated in the negative results of negotiations up to that time. So the U.N. Assembly was asked to give a majority decision as a directive in line with the Cairo Declaration which stated that Korea should be free and independent.

From 1948 onwards, International Commissions, representing the U.N. Assembly, worked in Korea. The records show that they worked to bring about the unification of Korea after free elections. They did not support any particular administration. They offered to authorities in North and South Korea the same facilities for arranging elections under international observation. They were denied access to the North. Thus they were able to observe elections only in the South, but they continued to attempt to negotiate with North Koreans and with Soviet authorities so that elections could be nationwide.

After the elections in the South, the U.N. Commission was kept in Korea to continue to work for unification. Its reports already referred to, show it to have been critical of any action, whether taken by the North or the South, which in its view might further divide the country and make unification even more difficult.

These international Commissions were for the most part composed of small or middle Powers. India has been represented every year; the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. were at no time on these field missions.

The U.N. field work in Korea is regarded, by an overwhelming majority of member-states, as being objective and international. The Commissions' recommendations therefore caused the General Assembly by resolution to regard the Republic of Korea as a lawfully-established government. Thus Sir John Pratt's suggestion of a North Korean administration supported by the U.S.S.R. and the Republic of Korea supported only by the U.S.A. is an over-simplification. By crossing the parallel on June 25 the North Koreans were moving against the results of international consultation that had been wide, thorough and protracted. Since June 25, at least fifty member-states have supported U.N. action in Korea. It is well known that there have been subsequent divergences of view as to how the action should be carried through, but within the scope selected by Sir John Pratt there can be no doubt that there was an overwhelming

majority of U.N. member-states convinced that the North Koreans had committed aggression against the principles of the U.N. Charter and despite the constant efforts that the U.N. had been making for two and a half years to negotiate with them.—Yours, etc.,

London, W.C.1      GEORGE IVAN SMITH  
Director, London Information  
Centre of the United Nations

Sir,—While accusing the British press of failing to report the full story of the origins of the Korean war, Sir John Pratt states a case that depends on the omission of important evidence, in particular the report of the United Nations Commission dated June 24 on their tour of the frontier. This stated that 'South Korean army is organised entirely for defence and is in no condition to carry out attack on large scale against forces of North' (Annexe J of British White Paper, Cmd. 8078 of 1950). Apart from this Sir John Pratt's case depends on equating South Korean words with North Korean deeds. The South Koreans made threats which their forces were completely incapable of carrying out. Whatever happened on June 25, the North Koreans had an army vastly superior in offensive weapons and proceeded to use it in an attempt to conquer the whole of Korea, in which they nearly succeeded.

There is strong evidence to support the charges that General MacArthur and his political associates would like to embroil the United States and, if possible, the United Nations in a war with China. But the ability of this group to influence policy has depended at every crucial point on Communist assistance. Suppose the North Korean army had remained on the 38th parallel where it could have repulsed with ease any South Korean attack. And it is almost certain that the North Korean Government, set up by the Russians and dependent on Russian military supplies, would have accepted Russian advice against taking the offensive. There would then have been nothing to justify U.N. military support for South Korea and no foreign forces would have supported any South Korean attack. Suppose that the Chinese Government, instead of actively applauding the North Korean attempt to settle the Korean problem by war, had exerted its influence in favour of a peaceful settlement. There would then have been no pretext for United States intervention in Formosa and it is practically certain that China would by now have obtained both Formosa and the seat on the United Nations. Suppose that, even now, the communists were to indicate their desire for a peaceful settlement, as opposed to a settlement which would give them the fruits of victory without fighting. It is certain that the attempt to brand China as an aggressor would fail.

Sir John Pratt discredits his largely sound case against General MacArthur by his refusal to criticise the more fanatical, but equally unscrupulous and irresponsible men on the communist side who combine professions of violent hostility against the extreme anti-communists with practical collaboration in opposing every attempt to settle international disputes without resort to war.—Yours, etc.,

Hull                    MICHAEL LINDSAY

## Nature and Art

Sir,—Last week Lord Brand repeated an assertion made in an earlier letter; namely that

those who support the new schools regard the work of Klee, Picasso, etc., as 'putting in the shade all, or nearly all, the masters of the past'. This is a misapprehension of what is at issue. A painter who in 1951 works along expressionist or surrealist lines is not thinking of putting Raphael or Ingres in the shade. His object is not to paint a better picture than the old masters in the National Gallery; but (if he thinks of that at all) to paint a different picture. The age of atomic fission is singularly different from that of the Renaissance or of the early nineteenth century. Again, the title 'Sculpture in the Home' suggests to me that the officials responsible for it are as blissfully unaware of the time they live in as are those members of the public who protest at their idea of a 'homely' kind of art.

Obviously much contemporary art is of a tragic nature, hysterical or terrible. Taken as a whole, the home is the last place for it, except the home of a hardened highbrow. 'The accelerated grimace' of the age is productive of distortion, deplored by Lord Brand. But some of the distortion in question is satire; much is classifiable as pure grotesque. There is a great deal of gaiety too. It is one of the only ways left to contemporary man to be gay.

Mr. Harold Speed is a pantheist. I cannot share his pantheistic transports.—Yours, etc.,  
London, W.11            WYNDHAM LEWIS

Sir,—In my last letter to you I exposed Mr. Lewis' peculiar controversial methods, and at the same time brought him back to the subject under discussion. But in his letter in THE LISTENER of January 18 he again evades the issue we have been debating in characteristic fashion, conveniently ignoring my just charges that he misrepresents what I wrote, a simple, but at the same time not permissible, expedient in controversies of this kind. In fact he again misrepresents what I said, adding suppositions, and so proceeds to deal with his opponent in masterly fashion. The first supposition is that I should deny that the sculpture of Rodin is more naturalistic than that of the Greeks. Why? I should not. It is more naturalistic than Greek sculpture. There are other suppositions, but one is enough. Mr. Lewis may suppose what he likes; there is no harm in it, but it is not argument, nor is it sense to deal with anything but the facts. Further Mr. Lewis somewhat naively informs us that 'the naturalism of the Greeks is a historic fact'. Of course it is. Who has disputed it? Mr. Lewis appears to have lost all consciousness of what the theme of this debate is. This is because Mr. Lewis' language is imprecise, even for an art theorist. When boiled down his arguments, such as they are, merely reveal that he likes one kind of thing and dislikes another. Then why not say so? It is his objective statements which have been challenged by Lord Brand, Mr. Speed and myself. No one, so far, seems to share his view as expressed by him.

I have never disputed that the word 'naturalism' may be applied to Greek art, though, in my view, the word 'realism' is a truer and a better word to express the ideas conveyed by all the great art of Europe. There are degrees of naturalism, as this correspondence has revealed, but we have not been discussing the interpretation of the word 'naturalism' at all, but the assertion that to the Greeks, and all European

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Edited by A. L. Bacharach

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CASSELL

artists, nature and art are one and the same thing, and that this, in theory, is radically wrong, and that the occultists, whom Mr. Lewis champions, are radically right. That is the point we have been debating, and the issue arose not because of what Mr. Lewis wrote in an article, but what he wrote to you in a letter. In describing me as a 'heckler' he reveals that he sees himself as the only contributor who may ascend the rostrum, your other correspondents being first, second, or third, or even fourth citizens, who are 'hecklers'. He is unable to grasp the fact that in the correspondence columns of THE LISTENER all are public speakers.

I remind Mr. Lewis that my first letter to you (on December 28) began: 'If we are to take Mr. Lewis seriously', etc., clearly indicating that what I took seriously was not so much the statements of Mr. Lewis, but the fact that they were given such important and such wide publicity as your columns afford. In fact they challenged examination on this account. Mr. Lewis says now that from now on he will not take me seriously. Nonsense! What he means is that from now on he will have to do so.

Yours, etc.,

London, W.14

A. K. LAWRENCE

### Man without God?

Sir,—Margaret Knight finds my denial of having made a certain assumption 'rather puzzling'. But why? Either my broadcast took the form of an argument whose validity depends on an 'enormous unproved assumption', or it did not. If it did, it should not be difficult, with the printed text available, to give precise reference to the terms of the defective argument, instead of referring vaguely to 'some of his statements'. If it did not, then why be puzzled at my denial?

When I say 'I see in all this the deadly insecurity of a generation which has lost its God and its Father', I am giving my own opinion. Obviously it is for others rather than myself to say what that opinion is worth. I have formed that opinion against the background of a lifetime of experience, specialised study of the available evidence, and enquiry from others of greater experience whose judgment I value. If this background constitutes what Margaret Knight designates my 'preconceptions', then of course my opinion is influenced by my 'preconceptions'. The atheistic 'preconceptions' of a consistent Freudian would rule out the explanation I have advanced for the enormous volume of psychological disability which afflicts society today, and would cause him to seek for an alternative explanation. But my 'preconceptions' may be right, and those of the Freudian wrong—quite certainly both cannot be right. It was neither to my purpose, nor even practicable in a fifteen-minute broadcast to justify my 'preconceptions', and I should strain the hospitality of your correspondence columns were I to attempt to do so in a letter.

By the way, I wonder if it has ever struck Margaret Knight that if society is psychologically sick, it is likely to remain unaware of the real cause of that sickness, which will be concealed from it by 'mechanisms' analogous to those which operate with the individual patient. Rationalisation will lead it to project the symptoms on to almost any cause except the real one.

Yours, etc.,

Roehampton J. LEYCESTER KING, S.J.

Sir,—Surely both Father King and Miss Knight pursue a will-o'-the-wisp if they seek statistical or 'objective' criteria of the relation between disbelief and neurosis, since evaluation of such an equation must be primarily subjective and personal.

Past and present statistics of formal allegiance

to this or that ecclesiastical organisation can have but uncertain relevance; while the line between normality and abnormality is of so hypothetical a character as to render the supposedly relevant statistical averages only of conventional interest in this particular problem.

So that while it may be true, as Miss Knight wrote, that Father King's 'assertions about the relation between disbelief and neurosis must have been based solely on his personal experience of psychological case-work', the statement hardly constitutes a valid criticism, since the available evidence can never admit of any other basis of assessment. The evidence is the same for all; the assessment of it must be ultimately a matter of purely personal interpretation.

Yours, etc.,

Pwllheli

HUGH D. GRIFFITH

### The Mark of Greatness

Sir,—The very least one can expect of a man, whom one is asked to look upon as 'great', is that he should have the courage of his convictions. Now, in his talk on Baron Friedrich von Hügel, Father M. C. D'Arcy makes no mention of the fact (which, perhaps, would not fit very neatly into his picture) that the Baron was, for years, regarded as the leader of the Modernist movement in the Roman Church. Certainly Father Tyrrell so regarded him. There is abundant evidence of this in Maud Petre's *Life* of the celebrated ex-Jesuit—a book, by the way, which Roman Catholics are forbidden to read. The movement was mainly concerned with the history of dogma and biblical criticism: on which subjects—until it became dangerous to be too outspoken—Tyrrell and von Hügel were in complete agreement.

When, for example, the papal Biblical Commission, amongst other curious 'findings', affirmed the authenticity of I John v. 7, a text which has long been recognised by scholars as spurious, von Hügel commented as follows: 'A system cannot claim to teach all the world and at the same time erect an impenetrable partition-wall between itself and the educated portion of that world. This opinion of the Biblical Commission is surely but one link in a chain of official attempts at the suppression of Science and Scholarship, beginning with Erasmus and culminating with Richard Simon and Alfred Loisy'.

A few years later the storm broke: the air was alive with ecclesiastical thunder and lightning; Tyrrell, Loisy, and others were excommunicated; but von Hügel somehow escaped unscathed. Like Lord Acton before him, he managed to dodge the Vatican's thunderbolts.

Thereafter the Baron never meddled with biblical criticism. He maintained a discreet silence. Now, I submit, with due respect—*salva reverentia* and all the rest of it—that a great man, or even a moderately courageous one, would have spoken out.

Yours, etc.,

Bournemouth

HAROLD BINNS

### The Stephen Family

Sir,—Your recent references to the Stephen family have reminded me of an occurrence in India of which I remember Sir Fitzjames Stephen (I was a boy) giving an account to my parents. Sitting in court as judge, a young native was, he said, brought before him, at the instance of the local Hindu priests, charged with spreading subversive doctrines opposed to the established religion. Sir Fitzjames retained a recollection of criticism of alleged superstitious practice, and of insistence on the brotherhood of mankind. It struck the judge at once, and forcibly, that he found himself in the same dilemma as Pontius Pilate. To gain time for reflection, he enquired whether the police had anything to say

as to the accused's character. The reply was that there was nothing against him; his father was known as a very respectable man, by trade a carpenter. This was enough for Sir Fitzjames. Having cautioned the defendant, he dismissed the charge against him. Would *O si sic omnes*, I venture to ask, be an admissible comment on his judgment?

It would be interesting to know whether the incident is recorded in any recollections of Sir Fitzjames's, or in Leslie Stephen's memoirs of him.—Yours, etc.,

London, S.W.1

CLAUD RUSSELL

### The Importance of Sade

Sir,—Mr. Russell makes a case for the interest of Sade—perhaps even for his peculiar interest today; but that is quite a different thing from his being 'the most important French writer of the eighteenth century'. The statement remains oracular—and silly.

Mr. Russell now admits that it would be absurd to suggest that 'the historical importance of Sade is in any way comparable to that of writers like Voltaire, Diderot and Rousseau'. But there remains also their intrinsic literary importance. Does Mr. Russell suppose that of Sade to be in any way comparable to those—or of several other French writers of the eighteenth century?

One sees that nothing much remains of the original statement. Merely the suggestion that Sade has a particular importance for today. Mr. Russell's identification of 'the most characteristic and odious features of modern life' is again oracular—he speaks for himself. Personally I think there is much to deplore in this habit of self-pity among contemporary intellectuals.

Yours, etc.,

Oxford

A. L. ROWSE

### Going to the Pantomime

Sir,—I am much obliged by Mr. Lambert's correction of my statement that the Surrey Theatre was in the Westminster Bridge Road. I ought to have checked my reference, but I hope I may be forgiven for confusing bridges that I crossed at least sixty years ago. One of the pleasures I get from these broadcasts of mine about an older London is the invaluable correspondence they bring from listeners.

Yours, etc.,

Denchworth

COMPTON MACKENZIE

### The Spread of Rumour

Sir,—I listened to 'The Spread of Rumour'. Mr. Charles Gibbs-Smith quoted the old story of Russian soldiers passing through England during the 1914-18 war as an illustration of rumour, when it was actually a fact. I challenge anyone to prove otherwise.

Russian soldiers arrived in Invergordon from Archangel and were entrained for Southampton. They came from Russia (also entrained in Ross-shire) so where is the rumour? Will the War Office, or the Highland Railway who supplied the troop trains, deny any record? Will the Harbour-master's office at Invergordon deny passing foreign troopships? Will the Records Office at Perth deny supplying extra rations to the 3rd Battalion Cameron Highlanders depot for the purpose of supplying appropriate meals for the disembarking troops? Will the older inhabitants of Invergordon deny the arrival of foreign troops?

No snow on their boots, and they were not bearded, but they were Tsarist troops, equally as smart as our Guards. I was on duty with the Cameron Highlanders entraining the whole Division, even including nurses.

Yours, etc.,

Ilford

R. C. ROBERTSON

## Art

# L'Ecole de Paris, 1900-1950

By ROBERT MELVILLE

**O**NE'S first glimpse of the school of Paris show at Burlington House is like a blow in the face: it is as if one were entering a large and somewhat dingy receiving depot where pictures are put haphazardly on to the walls before being sorted for packing.

The pictures were chosen by Mr. Frank McEwen of the British Council in Paris, in consultation with the French authorities, and if he had been asked to supervise the *impression d'ensemble* which he obviously had in mind when drawing up his admirable list of painters, the Academy would have been assured of our gratitude. As everyone knows by now, Picasso refused to exhibit, but the other outstanding innovators are properly represented, together with their most able followers, some *maitres populaires*, and a number of artists, such as Vlaminck, Derain and Segonzac, who started off as if they belonged to the twentieth century and ended up in the nineteenth. Only a connoisseur of modern painting could have arranged these pictures to give a coherent account of the development of the movement, and the Royal Academicians responsible for the hanging cannot claim such a distinction. In fact, they would seem to be so ignorant of the history of the movement, and so shockingly insensitive to the action of one picture upon another that they have very nearly succeeded in achieving that atmosphere of confusion and madness that would provide them with a justification of their hatred of modern art.

All the same, if one stops worrying about its probable effect upon the uninitiated, the jumble has its own peculiar pleasures to offer. The surrealists represented here scarcely survive the rather savage game of chance juxtapositions that is being played out on the walls, but they can fairly claim that it is one of their most cherished principles that provides the *frissons* of the show.

Almost every good modern picture has a marked quality of translucence, as if it were a window on to an otherwise unknowable world of light, and although Bonnard, Matisse and Braque disclose this transparency more sumptuously than the others it does not mean that they are giants among pygmies, for it is a quality that persists strongly throughout the exhibition. Inept hanging has allowed sudden and disconcerting patches of opacity to appear in every room, but they are caused by works which are not in the main stream.

The largest patch is Rousseau's 'Hungry Lion Springing on an Antelope\*', where the animals perform the kill like actors on a stage, against a background of impenetrable jungle which one's eye judges to be not more than a couple of yards deep. This old-fashioned, wonderfully composed picture is an unconscious burlesque of academic wild animal paintings; it is superb, but it is not of our time. Vivin, who is more naive than Rousseau, is nevertheless a thoroughly twentieth-century painter. His diagrammatical picture of the Invalides, whose white and pale blue ground is invaded at the top by a half circle of golden dome, balanced below by the three brown ovals of the doors, easily established links with both Dufy and the pure abstractionists.

Another patch of opacity is identified with one of the best of the

Utrillos, whose smoky whites are made to look drab by the proximity of a sun-drenched Bonnard. This Utrillo would reassert itself in appropriate company, but it is the work of an artist who is closer in spirit to the early Pissarro than to any of his contemporaries. Very ugly patches on the opposite wall are caused by two of Vuillard's late conventional portraits, and the depth of his fall from grace can be measured

by the exquisite early interior that hangs beside them: it is built up by shapes of pure colour which are abstract stand-ins for all the particularities of a room and at the same time create light and air.

Perhaps an even uglier patch is formed in another room by a huge Max Ernst of a prancing personage, which attempts to convey a twentieth-century image in a nineteenth-century naturalistic technique. Mercilessly placed between two gay and brilliant Miro's, it looks blind and crippled. Ernst was a sensitive artist in his dada period, and because dadaism was not treasonable to its own time it is wearing better than surrealism. The only dadaist work on view is a strong and typical example by Francis Picabia. It was conceived in a joking spirit but has shed its facetiousness and is at home with Léger's beautiful 'Still Life with Inkpot' and Mondrian's 'Composition'. The greatest of the dadaists, Marcel Duchamp, who abandoned painting several years ago, and whose work has scarcely ever been seen in London, is represented by a masterly little cubo-futurist picture of a seated girl. It is irrelevantly placed near some large and dominating Rouaults, but is invulnerable in its causal refinement. Soutine's passionate little picture of a valet should have been near the Rouaults, for both these painters in their different ways have created images of an inner presence as a direct result of their excruciating sense of the ugliness of the flesh.

It was a surprise to find some pictures by Kandinsky hanging a little vacantly beside the *fauves*, for he is

essentially a Bauhaus figure, and, although he has lived on and off in Paris, by that kind of reckoning Matta and Wifredo Lam should have been included to strengthen the group of works by the younger men. They are better painters than Kandinsky, and have the Parisian elegance and control of *matière*. If their absence is allowed for—and they are conspicuously the best artists of their generation—the younger men make an honourable showing. Hartung, Manessier, Bazaine and Van Velde extract new finds from a world first explored by the *fauves* and cubists. They are dedicated like their elders to an art of light and space, an art whose poise and certainty outwits the confusion wrought by alien hands.

Among the miscellaneous books on art which have lately appeared, Allen and Unwin have put out four new volumes in the 'Holbein Art Books'. *Dutch Master Drawings of the Seventeenth Century*, with an introduction by J. Q. van Regteren Altena; *French Master Drawings of the Eighteenth Century*, with an introduction by Erwin Gräfmann, and *Albrecht Dürer: Drawings and Water-colours*, with an introduction by Edmund Schilling, are in the same format and cost 10s. 6d. each. The fourth volume, *Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec*, is in a larger format; it contains ten colour reproductions, selected with an introduction by Georg Schmidt and costs 21s.



'The Valet', by Soutine, from 'L'Ecole de Paris, 1900-1950'

# The Changing Novel

By PHYLLIS BENTLEY

**E**VERYONE knows, or at any rate everyone feels, that the novel as an art form has changed a good deal during recent years. I find it easiest to indicate its present characteristics by comparing it with the great mid-Victorian fictions of the last century. We were all brought up on these novels at school in our youth, and therefore tend to regard them as the norm of fiction. Without at all accepting the idea that these mid-Victorian novels form a model to which all subsequent writings should conform, I believe they do offer a pattern well-known to all readers, deviations from which can be readily understood.

### Taboo on Sex

What was it like, then, this great mid-Victorian fiction—the fiction of Dickens, of Thackeray, of Trollope, of George Eliot—to which we are constantly referred as classic? These novels were long. Their stories centred in England. They were crowded with characters and external incident. One whole section of life, however, was omitted if possible; if not, covered with a discreet veil. Any open allusion to the physical aspect of sex was strictly taboo, as Thackeray lamented when writing *Pendennis*; though the matter might be delicately hinted at, or wept over without being defined, as in *Adam Bede*. These novels always possessed a young hero and heroine of considerable personal attraction, who belonged to some section of the genteel middle-class—or if one of them did not belong to this genteel middle-class at the beginning of the book, he or she usually attained that status, together with a sufficient income to support it suitably, at the end of the book as the reward of virtue. These novels had also, often, a well-defined villain, and sometimes a villainess. The action throughout was judged by a single ethical standard, the Christian vicarage standard. The hero and heroine kept—on the whole, with slight occasional lapses by the hero—the ten commandments; the villain and the villainess did not. As it was generally believed, in mid-Victorian times, that men and women were completely and solely responsible for their own actions, people who did wrong were people who deliberately and wilfully intended badness. And therefore, in the mid-Victorian novel, the hero and heroine came to a happy ending and the villain and villainess to a decidedly sticky one, to the complete satisfaction of author and reader. So much for the matter of the mid-Victorian novel and for its faith, which we might define as ‘to entertain virtuously’. What of its technique?

These enormous Victorian novels were extremely skilfully constructed with regard to plot. They always had at least one well-defined plot, that is, a pattern of actions linked by cause and effect, which had a definite beginning, middle and end. Often they had more than one chain of cause and effect, more than one thread of plot: *Bleak House* has six, *Middlemarch* has seven, all neatly and skilfully interwoven. But, except as regards plot, there was no particular shape in Victorian novels; if the novelist felt like writing a whole chapter of description without a single scene, he did so cheerfully; nor did he hesitate—at any rate if he were Dickens—to pause and moralise if he felt so inclined. Indeed, Arnold Bennett justly observed that none of the Victorian novelists were ‘conscious artists’. Consequently, they are mostly not stylists in the use of words.

### The Victorians’ ‘Magnificent Results’

That is, I know, a flippant and over-simplified sketch of mid-nineteenth-century fiction. Please don’t think I am decrying, depreciating, the great nineteenth-century novelists. That is very far from my intention. In art, a method can only be judged by its results, and the unconscious method of the Victorians produced results which were magnificent.

Now as between the novel of today and the mid-Victorian novel, there is a threefold change. There is a change in matter: that is, a change in what is written. There is a change in manner: that is, a change in how it is written. There is another change, not quite so easy to define, but of which we are all conscious: that is a change in why the novel is written, a change, I will call it, in faith. The cause

of these changes is everything which has happened between 1850 and 1950. But there are certain factors amid all this weight of history which have exercised a very direct and powerful influence on English fiction. The Education Acts of the eighteen-seventies, which extended the range of readers and therefore of writers; the first Great War, with its aftermath of disillusion and economic depression; the growth of the social conscience, especially in its economic aspects, which says that all men are brothers; the work of Freud, which says—in a somewhat sardonic tone—that the deeper you go into the human mind the more men appear brothers indeed. To me it is, above all, Freud and the psycho-analysts who have changed the novel, for they have opened a new layer of human mind to the investigation of the novelist, and put sharp tools into his hand with which to conduct that investigation.

Let me deal first with the change in manner, in technique, in the modern novel. Let me say at once that the modern novelist is a conscious artist. He cares immensely for his technique; he deliberately uses it to make the reader more intensely and therefore more beautifully conscious of the life which he presents. He is prepared to introduce any technical alterations, scrap ruthlessly any technical conventions, in order to secure this desired end.

### Attitude to Words

His attitude to words, for example, is admirably summed up in some lines by Sir Osbert Sitwell, written in 1918:

Let us prune the tree of language  
Of its dead fruit.  
Let us melt up the clichés  
Into molten metal,  
Fashion weapons that will scald and flay;  
Let us curb this eternal humour  
And become witty.

His attitude to construction is equally ruthless. To explain the great change which has taken place in the novel’s construction, may I just remind you that there are three components in the ordinary narrative of the novel. There is scene: the narration of single specific actions, whether inside or outside the mind. There is description: where the novelist halts his pageant for a moment and describes. There is summary: where the novelist does not narrate single specific actions, but summarises many actions. The change introduced by Dorothy Richardson in 1915, and by Virginia Woolf independently from 1919 onwards, consisted in the rejection of two of these components. As Mrs. Woolf explained:

Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions . . . from all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms. . . . Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern . . . which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness.

Accordingly, Mrs. Woolf’s novels consisted increasingly of the record of the atoms falling upon the mind. Description, summary, what the ordinary reader thinks of as linking narrative, is absent. Here, for instance, are a couple of pages from her beautiful novel, *Jacob’s Room*. Jacob is in a Cambridge college, talking to a friend:

The low voice was Simeon’s.

The voice was even lower than answered him. The sharp tap of a pipe on the mantelpiece cancelled the words. And perhaps Jacob only said ‘hum’, or said nothing at all. True, the words were inaudible. It was the intimacy, a sort of spiritual suppleness, when mind prints upon mind indelibly.

‘Well, you seem to have studied the subject’, said Jacob, rising and standing over Simeon’s chair. He balanced himself; he swayed a little. He appeared extraordinarily happy, as if his pleasure would brim and spill down the sides if Simeon spoke.

Simeon said nothing. Jacob remained standing. But intimacy—the room was full of it, still, deep, like a pool. Without need of movement or speech it rose softly and washed over everything, mollifying, kindling, and coating the mind with the lustre of pearl, so that if you talk of a light, of Cambridge burning, it’s not languages only. It’s Julian the Apostate.

But Jacob moved. He murmured good-night. He went out into the court. He buttoned his jacket across his chest. He went back to his rooms, his footsteps rang out, his figure loomed large. Back from the Chapel, back from the Hall, back from the Library, came the sound of his footsteps, as if the old stone echoed with magisterial authority: 'The young man—the young man—the young man—back to his rooms'.

## IV

What's the use of trying to read Shakespeare, especially in one of those little thin paper editions whose pages get ruffled, or stuck together with sea-water? Although the plays of Shakespeare had frequently been praised, even quoted, and placed higher than the Greek, never since they started had Jacob managed to read one through. Yet what an opportunity!

Sea-water! we think. Yes, Jacob's mind is now receiving sea impressions, and we gradually learn that he is on his friend Tim Durrant's yacht off the Scilly Isles. The Victorian novelist would have given us a linking paragraph between Cambridge and the sea and then slipped into the specific incident of Jacob trying to read Shakespeare. The whole recent tendency of the intellectual novelist has been to reject such linking narrative, and uses this 'maximum scene', this atom-recording, technique.

## Splitting of the 'Atom-recording Technique'

In James Joyce we meet the splitting of this atom. He perceives that the human mind does not always wait for the whole of one atom to fall, but moves quickly to the next associated with it. Thus we find in his prose the telescoping of impressions, and so of sentences, even of words. Consider this, for example,

Now a run for his money! Now a dash to her dot! Old cocker, young crowy, sifadda, sisson. A brae new, speedhound, outstripperous on the wind. Like a waft to a wingweary one or a s.o.s. to a coastguard. For directly with his whoop, stop and an upalepsy didando a tishy, in appreciable less time than it takes a glaciator to submerger an Atlangthis, was he again, agob, before the trembly ones, a spark's gap off, doubledasquesched, gotten orlop in a simplesailormade and shaking the storm out of his hiccups.

As regards the *matter* of the modern novel, I think the aim of the novelist is to make his reader more fully aware, more fully conscious, of life than ever before. As compared with that of the 1850 novel, the *matter* of the modern novel shows a very great increase, both in breadth and depth, for our characters. In breadth, we have retrieved the broad humanity of the eighteenth-century novelists. No longer is the novelist restricted to that handsome and genteel young pair as his main characters; he can use instead a woman of the streets (as in *A Day Off*, by Storm Jameson), a man dying under an operation (as in *Corporal Tune*, by L. A. G. Strong), a murderer (as in *Gun for Sale* and *Brighton Rock* and other works by Graham Greene), a moneylender (as in *The Secret Journey*, by James Hanley), or a mere middle-aged housewife (as in *Mrs. Dalloway*, by Virginia Woolf), and provided he justifies his choice by making the character interesting, nobody will offer any objection. The modern novelist's theme and plot, too, have a much wider range. No longer are great sections of life cut off from his handling; he seems to have adopted as his motto Rabelais' remark: 'What God allows to happen, that will I allow to be written about'.

The new increase in depth can be seen at once if you compare, say, the beginning of Aldous Huxley's *Point Counterpoint* with similar scenes in the Victorian writers. It is a scene between a man who has loved a woman and tired of her, and the woman who still loves him. Thackeray has a similar situation in *Vanity Fair* between George Osborne and Amelia, Trollope has it in *The Small House at Allington* between Adolphus Crosbie and Lily Dale. Thackeray and Trollope display, with consummate skill, their characters' actions and the motives of those actions; but Huxley is able to present also the strange back-and-forth in Walter Bidlake's unconscious mind before he finds a motive he can rationalise and present as a suitable excuse for leaving Marjorie for the evening.

Now as to the change in faith of the modern novel. I said that the purpose of the mid-Victorian novel was: to entertain virtuously. In moments of cynical depression I sometimes remark to myself that our novelists today have divided that purpose between them. Our 'tough' popular novelists entertain without virtue, and some of our intellectual novelists impose virtue—their own kind of virtue, of course—without entertainment. But in fact the serious novelist of today does not deliberately concern himself with either virtue or entertainment, but with truth. To make his readers more truly conscious of life than ever before, is the serious novelist's faith.

This aim has, of course, always been present in the serious artist's mind, but it received a great impetus in the period following the first Great War, when the general expectation of peace and plenty received such a rude disappointment. The young writer discovered with a shock that something was wrong with the world; that wrong must not, he resolved, be allowed to conceal itself; and therefore a fierce determination arose to 'debunk' life. To debunk is to strip away from any person, idea or institution all its accretions of sentiment and tradition—with a view, naturally, to throwing it away if it does not look worth keeping when seen in its nakedness. If one had to indicate any one feature which was the most characteristic of the modern novel, one would perhaps point to this debunking attitude. Another aspect of the novelist's change of faith lies in his treatment of good and evil characters. It is this aspect which causes some readers disquietude. The Very Rev. Cyril Alington once remarked jokingly of modern novels:

They have driven some of the most respectable of us to detective stories, where if one is not on the side of the angels, one is at least on the side of the police.

The modern novelist cannot gloat over the downfall of his villain, because he regards an evildoer, not as a person who wishes to do evil, but as a bundle of complexes, the victim of some unfortunate incident in his nursery. This completely alters the old-fashioned plot, where the villain made his exit amid well-deserved hisses. Indeed the modern novelist's depiction of evil does not allow the reader to feel as fine a fellow as the Victorian depiction did. When one read of George Osborne's bad behaviour, one thought happily: 'What a cad George is!' Which meant: 'I am not like that'. But when one reads of Walter Bidlake's shilly-shallying one is obliged to think: 'O dear, I am like that'. It is not as cosy a sentiment!

## Value of Multiplicity

Another aspect of the modern novelist's attitude to life has been admirably expressed by Aldous Huxley in *Point Counterpoint*:

The essence of the new way of looking is multiplicity. Multiplicity of eyes and multiplicity of aspects seen. For instance, one person interprets events in terms of bishops; another in terms of the price of flannel camisoles; another . . . thinks of it in terms of good times. And then there's the biologist, the chemist, the physicist, the historian. Each sees, professionally, a different layer of reality. What I want to do is to look with all those eyes at once. With religious eyes, scientific eyes, economic eyes. . . .

Huxley contends, you see, that life cannot be truly understood, or indeed truly lived, by considering it from a single standpoint. It is this idea of the value of multiplicity which is the source of the 'novels of assembly' which are so characteristic of modern fiction, in many countries and on many levels: Jules Romains' *Men of Good Will*, Huxley's *Point Counterpoint*, Winifred Holtby's *South Riding*, are all examples.

May I sum up, then, by saying that the purpose of the modern novelist is to make his readers more fully, truly and beautifully conscious of life? This search for consciousness, which delves even into the unconscious and strives to bring its content up into conscious knowledge, seems to me to mark all modern art and indeed all modern life. It is a noble aim. But I feel that the last thirty years were an age of experiment rather than of achievement, that tools were sharpened, techniques perfected, ready for use, but were not fully used. The three changes were not fully integrated. Some novelists extended the external scope of the novel. Some deepened its penetration. Some improved its technique. Some wrestled with its faith. But no novelist seemed quite to do all those things, to fuse and use all the means at his command. The field lies open to a novelist of the second half of the twentieth century who will use the new technique, the new vision, the new range, in an enthralling story of noble amplitude and illuminating relevance to human fate.—*North of England Home Service*

*The Little World of Don Camillo* by Giovanni Guareschi is a collection of stories built round two principal characters in an Italian village—the Catholic priest and the communist mayor, each trying to out-maneuvre the other. To all appearances they are at daggers drawn, but below the surface there is human feeling and respect on either side. One could wish those qualities had their counterpart between east and west today—that all communists were like Peppone, the mayor, and all Catholics like Don Camillo. The stories which have been popular in Italy are amusingly told and should have a wide appeal. They have been translated by Una Vincenzo Troubridge and published by Gollancz, price 10s. 6d.

# The Listener's Book Chronicle

## The Life of John Maynard Keynes

By R. F. Harrod. Macmillan. 25s.

MR. HARROD HAD a great opportunity; he might well have added to the small number of biographical masterpieces. For to write a biography that will rise above the ordinary undistinguished level which satisfies the common reader of the circulating library, the writer requires a subject who rises above the level of the ordinary distinguished lady or gentleman, lately deceased. Such people are very rare, but Keynes was certainly one of them. He and his life make an almost ideal subject for a biographer. There was nothing ordinary about him. His mind was a wonderful instrument, for it combined power and depth with an astonishing rapidity of thought. People with minds like this very rarely have the kind of imagination which adds to their thought the indefinable streak which we call genius. Keynes might entrance one or exasperate one, as is clear from this book, but no one who talked or worked or quarrelled with him could fail to see that streak of genius in him.

His character was as remarkable as his mind, a strange mixture of extreme sophistication with a certain childishness, if one dare use the word of the author of Bretton Woods and *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*. Mr. Harrod had here rich enough material in what Keynes thought, wrote, and was; but that is not all, for unlike most thinkers and writers, particularly academic economists, Keynes was as remarkable in the world of action as in the groves of thought. And he belonged to a species of Englishman, not uncommon in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, but almost extinct today, whose knowledge, thought, and activity are passionately concerned with almost every aspect of life. So Keynes was a don, a civil servant, a speculator, a business man, a journalist, a writer, a farmer, a picture dealer, a statesman, a theatrical manager, a book collector and half a dozen other things, and in all these occupations he was equally eminent.

No doubt this embarrassment of riches, while giving Mr. Harrod his opportunity, added enormously to his difficulties and is some excuse for his failure. Keynes' life falls into three distinct compartments. There is first the more or less private compartment, which began at Cambridge and lasted to the end, his relations with that circle of his intimate friends which unfortunately acquired the label 'Bloomsbury'. Then there is his work as a writer, thinker, and teacher, and the important question of his contribution to the theory of economics. Lastly there is the compartment of his essentially public life which, by his achievements in the first war and his negotiations with America in the second war, impinged upon history, but which also had innumerable ramifications through the worlds of insurance, finance, the arts, the theatre, and agriculture. Though the biography as a whole is unsatisfactory, the material is so interesting and Keynes' character so fascinating that they often counteract Mr. Harrod's defects as a biographer. The defects, too, are less conspicuous and therefore less disturbing when he deals with Keynes' books and negotiations than when he tells us about his wife and his friends. Mr. Harrod himself is a well-known Oxford economist, who had the advantage, as a young man, of crossing over for a short period to Cambridge and there sitting at the feet of Keynes. He can, therefore, write with real knowledge and some authority about the esoteric doctrines in the three treatises of the master. It may be noted that, though he puts

Keynes, as an economist, in the same class as Adam Smith and Ricardo, he thinks that none of Keynes' books will survive as well as *The Wealth of Nations*.

The best part of the book is the final section which deals with Keynes' negotiations with the Americans during the last war. The facts are fascinating and throw great light upon Keynes' merits and defects in the world of action—his intelligence and integrity on the one side and his over-optimism and irritability on the other. The reason why Mr. Harrod is more successful here is that he is more content than in the other parts of the book to let the facts speak for themselves. His failure as a biographer, when he deals with his subject's private life, his character and friends, and even to some extent his economics, is due to his mistaken belief that he must perpetually add his own comments, even if they are only exclamations like: 'Poor Maynard!' The comments are too often naively semi-humorous and leave the reader rather embarrassed. The book, like the reader, becomes more and more uneasy, and the uneasiness is exaggerated by Mr. Harrod's literary style which oscillates between inappropriate intimacy and strings of rhetorical questions. He would have greatly improved it if he had reduced its length by a hundred pages, cutting out ninety per cent. of his own reflections, the Stracheyean reconstruction of Keynes' reflections, and all sentences ending with an interrogation mark.

## The Traveller's Tree. By Patrick Leigh Fermor. Murray. 21s.

There is a sentence in this book which might easily be overlooked yet which expresses aptly Mr. Leigh Fermor's *credo* as a writer. It is to the effect that there is too much insistence today on the dichotomy between the life of the intellect and the life of action. T. E. Lawrence, St. Exupéry, Malraux should have taught us better but, still, the fallacy does continue. Mr. Leigh Fermor, during his travels among the Caribbean Islands, could not hope instantly to encounter the dangerous adventures which so appeal to him (he was responsible for the kidnapping of General Kreipe on Crete during the war), but in his account of the journey one is always conscious of a man seeking to integrate the interests of his mind with the desires of his body for physical adventure. And often the one brings the other; his long horseback ride through difficult country ends in the reserve of the last handful of the indigenous population of the islands, the Caribs, and immediately he is making notes about their language, noticing the number of girls with negroid characteristics and incessantly questioning everybody he meets.

An anthropologist might smile at his *ad hoc* methods, but his great virtue is an intense, humanistic curiosity about everything he sees, from the history of the Palaeologue whose tombstone he one day discovered, to the syntax of Calypsos or the sartorial aristocracy of the Sagaboyes of Trinidad. Thirsty always for information he began each visit to an island with a day in the public library, and he seems to possess the valuable intuition of knowing just which subjects will burgeon once they have been inquired into. How many tourists in Jamaica, for instance, would have ignored the Riviera delights of Montego Bay to discover the strange Ethiopian sect which lives in derelict shacks and, under the influence of day-long marijuana smoking, plans to take over the governorship of the world? It is when he comes into contact with such strange

ways of thought that Mr. Leigh Fermor is at his best. He is an amateur of odd religions, and most nights during his stay in Haiti he would answer the call of the drum and visit the *tonnelles* where the rites of Voodoo were celebrated, to watch the possession of the adepts as they rolled in ecstasy before the altar of Baron Samedi—a cross surmounted by a bowler hat, hung with a tattered morning coat. He collected information about Erzulie, the Voodoo Venus, with whom the male adepts regularly manage to spend a night of conjured orgy.

It would not be fair to Mr. Leigh Fermor to give the impression that this long book of absorbing interest is rewarding mainly from the fascinating nature of its subject-matter. *The Traveller's Tree* is a writer's book as much as a traveller's book, written in a rich but unadorned style which allows for the occasional flashing phrase which is the prerogative of every travel writer—and seized with varying degrees of success. On the evidence of this first book Mr. Leigh Fermor has a future of distinction in other fields of writing as well as the travel book.

Mr. Costa, who was one of his two companions on the journey, has illustrated it with a series of exceptionally good photographs.

## Essays on Life and Literature

By Robert Lynd.

Dent: 'Everyman Library'. 4s. 6d.

For an author of our own years to be included in the Everyman Library is high distinction. Robert Lynd has swiftly and justly received this posthumous honour with the added tribute of an admirable introduction by Desmond MacCarthy. The selection properly includes the various phases of Lynd's affections and propensities, his devotion to Ireland, his connoisseurship of Dr. Johnson and his circle, his critical assessments of his contemporaries, and his mastery of the light, discursive essay.

There was something of paradox about the faith and works of Robert Lynd. A Belfast Presbyterian by birth, he was a Dubliner at heart, a Nationalist whose friends and allegiances were certainly not in the Ulster camp. By profession and taste he was what is called 'a bookman'; yet in fifty years of writing he wrote very few books, the volumes under his name being mainly collections of essays and articles. He looked the essence of lean and scholarly asceticism, but nobody was happier or more engrossed at a race-meeting or a Rugby football match. Indeed, when the green jerseys of Ireland were on the field, his neighbouring spectators might fear for his safety, so terrible was his anxiety, so physical his ecstasy, according to the movement of the game. He relished every kind of party, from the political to the social, from the salon to the tavern.

In short, Lynd was the perfect essayist—he practised the craft for many years as 'Y.Y.' of the *New Statesman*—because he linked the style and vocabulary of the man in the study with the proclivities and sympathies of the man in the street. His range of comprehension was of the widest. The piece, here included, on the toils and sufferings of a betting man is typical in its grace, its humour and its genuine realism; after all, the fellow who diligently works away at weights, form, distances, and all the other harassing details of race-course prophecy is indeed a busy statistician. It is, perhaps, a pity that this collection of Lynd's work contains so few of his enchanting discourses upon things of use and wont, the pleasures and prejudices

of the common man. But there are only 274 pages and it was thought wise to include as much as possible of the Johnsonian portraiture.

The essays on Yeats and Sir Max Beerbohm are wise inclusions; they are enthusiastic, almost adulatory, assessments, but Lynd was essentially an enjoyer. As a critic he was rarely severe: he would rather overlook than put down the kind of art that annoyed him. It can be said that his judgment was too subject to his sympathy, that he was too kind to be ranked with the greatest of critics. But what he liked he so acutely appraised that greatness cannot be denied to his verdicts.

Desmond MacCarthy quotes with approval Lynd's remark of 'Max'—'What other writer could drive respect and mockery tandem with the same delicate skill?' and all will approve that approval. One could add this further observation of Lynd's upon the same author: 'He (Max) is not a man engaged in a Laocoon struggle with his imagination—a man desperately at grips with a tremendous theme. He is more comparable to a laundress than to a Laocoon. His work has the perfection of a starched shirt-front, which, if it is not perfect, is nothing. One would not be surprised to learn that he writes in evening dress'.

Lynd himself wrote rather in his pyjamas than in 'full fig'. He had life-long physical disability; he was inherently unpunctual and a dasher-off of last minute pieces. Yet he was such a master of craft, that few, surveying his work in revival, would guess that much of it was hasty journalism. Speedy it may have been, but stable it is and well qualified to survive.

### Private Corporations and Their Control

By A. B. Levy. Routledge and Kegan Paul. 2 vols. £3 10s.

The emergence of the corporation as the dominant form of business control is one of the most significant developments in modern societies. Its importance for the economist, the lawyer and the sociologist was powerfully demonstrated by the American writers Bearle and Means in their book *The Modern Corporation and Private Property* published in 1933. Since then much has been written on the subject, especially in the U.S.A. where factual information is plentiful, and a number of studies of public, as distinct from private, corporations, based mainly on British experience have also appeared. The present work is, however, in some ways more comprehensive than any of its predecessors, for it includes not only Britain and the U.S.A. but also Germany, France and other countries within its survey.

Mr. Levy's approach is essentially that of the lawyer, but one feels that in Part I (Historical and Economic Background) a somewhat broader treatment of the subject would have been appropriate, showing the evolution of the corporate enterprise in relation to changing economic conditions. The account of private corporations in modern society which concludes Part I is also a little disappointing, but in the absence of adequate and comparable statistics it is impossible to determine at all accurately the size of the corporate sector in the different national economies or the dispersal of ownership and concentration of control within the sector. It is however established that in the U.S.A. the corporate sector of national economy is larger than anywhere else and is mainly dominated by large corporations. On the other hand, the accelerating advance of the largest units, noted by Bearle and Means, appears to have been checked in recent years.

In Part II (Legal Problems of Private Corporations) the author examines the framework of existing company law mainly in Britain, U.S.A., France and Germany. In all these

countries the development of corporate enterprise has given rise to similar problems concerning the creation of companies, their structure, the rights and duties of shareholders, the function of management and its supervision both in the interests of shareholders and in the interests of society as a whole. With regard to the problem of control, Mr. Levy feels that the relationship of corporate enterprise to the community has been over-emphasised and that more attention should be given to the supervision of control within the corporation for the better protection of the different classes of shareholders. Most of the suggested reforms aim at securing greater publicity for the affairs of corporations and Mr. Levy believes that by this means the problem of control in both its aspects could be effectively met. He gives a useful account of the progress of nationalisation, especially in Britain; but he does not regard nationalisation as the inevitable remedy for the abuses of corporate enterprise. On the contrary, the establishment of public corporations creates new problems concerning the relations of management with the State, with consumers and with workers.

This is an important book and it will be valued by all students of economic institutions, not only for the impressive amount of information which it brings together, but also for the objectivity with which the investigation is carried out.

### The Last Invasion of Britain. By Commander E. H. Stuart Jones, R.N. University of Wales Press. 21s.

Commander Stuart Jones' interest in the attempted invasions of the British Isles during the wars of the French Revolution has led him to follow his recent book on the Bantry Bay Expedition of 1796 with this detailed account of the landing made by the French at Fishguard in February 1797—a landing which again showed the inability of the Royal Navy, as it was handled at this stage of the war, to safeguard the coast from invasion, although on this occasion the major part of the expedition's naval escort was intercepted and captured on its return to Brest. At Bantry Bay the weather had prevented the main French forces from landing, but at Fishguard they all got ashore unopposed, and the main interest of the story lies in the reactions of the local population and volunteer defence forces to the invasion which they encountered on their doorsteps.

The French Government had originally planned the expedition as a diversion to the main effort of invasion at Bantry, but the disorganised navy of the Republic had been unable to provide the necessary escort in time, and the expedition's eventual dispatch in isolation from any associated operations made its failure almost certain. Its commander was William Tate, a violently anti-British American, who was almost seventy years of age; and the bulk of its one thousand and fifty men was composed of convicts recruited straight from prison. To this *Légion Noire*, as it became called, the French Government allotted the impossible tasks of capturing and sacking Bristol, the second city of the kingdom, as well as inflicting the same fate on Chester and Liverpool. In addition Tate was instructed to foment a general insurrection among the poorer classes, whom the French authorities believed to be ripe for rebellion against the Government and their social superiors. Compared with these grandiose plans, the reality was a complete farce. Once the French troops were ashore they showed a capacity only for plunder and drink, and in view of their complete lack of discipline and fighting spirit, Tate was compelled to surrender to the local forces within two days of landing.

On the British side the situation was handled entirely by the local Fencibles and Yeomanry, the Home Guard and Territorials of the day, regular troops playing no part at all. A local landowner, Lord Cawdor the commander of the Yeomanry, by his leadership and initiative bluffed the French into surrendering to his numerically inferior forces, and the expedition ended without any fighting between the opposing troops. Events, after the invasion had been dealt with, however, showed Lord Cawdor and his fellow country gentlemen in a less favourable light. The malicious attacks made on the military conduct of the commander of the Fishguard Fencibles, and the false accusations of High Treason made against local nonconformists for having allegedly collaborated with the enemy, showed the gentlemen of Pembrokeshire to be capable of small-mindedness and class-prejudice, as well as of energy and courage.

Commander Stuart Jones has written a detailed and well-documented account of the whole expedition, of which the most valuable part is that which shows how the inhabitants of a remote part of Britain reacted to the invasion of their neighbourhood. The book is well illustrated, and it will be welcomed by all those interested in the history of Wales and in the wars of the French Revolution.

### The Lonely Tower. Studies in the Poetry of W. B. Yeats. By T. R. Henn. Methuen. 21s.

Perhaps, considered as a whole, Yeats is the most difficult of all poets in English. So much so that an essay devoted to sorting out, as far as possible, the different kinds of difficulty in his work might be a thing of value. Mr. Henn's study in appreciation divides itself into aspects and phases covering the whole poetic career, and it is impossible in a short review to do justice either to the whole of his exposition or to possible objections. If one feels in the end that he illustrates rather than clears the difficulties, that may be partly because he approaches them in the spirit of an apologist, and never considers them objectively from without. Both approaches are surely necessary. If Yeats' obscurity is sometimes inevitable, it is sometimes a weakness. He was one of the most arduous of writers ('I who have always hated work'). It is evident, particularly in his middle years, that he experienced almost insuperable difficulty in finishing a poem. He could only do so, at times, by means of a sudden departure into image or thought which, however striking in itself, has no logical or poetic coherence with what went before. 'Adam's Curse' and 'The Cold Heaven' are minor examples of this, and the habit persists into the late poems, even 'Byzantium'.

As for the complexities of symbol and myth, the writer offers a useful analysis of the kinds—archetypal, traditional, personal—which Yeats employed. The common reader may well object here that the poet's use of all three tended to confusion rather than complexity, and that where the poetry intensifies, the symbolism is less complex. The very simplified analysis of *A Vision* should be useful both to those who have never read it and to those who have. Whatever its faults, that work is central to Yeats' thought, and is of considerable and curious value in itself. Among minor matters, it is certainly a discovery that part of 'News for the Delphic Oracle' is based in detail on Poussin's 'Peleus and Thetis', and almost matches it in nobility and force. It is a pity Yeats had not studied Poussin more, and Dulac and Ricketts less. The writer explores further pictorial possibilities, but apart from an interesting Palmer, produces no example which is positively illuminating. It is in fact a prevailing fault of the book that, to enforce proof or conjecture, instances and quotations are often

questionably adduced or duplicated, a habit which clogs rather than clears the issue. If the whole were two thirds as long it would be more rewarding.

The writer lists Yeats' 'detractors' and rebuts them. But is it really necessary to defend the charge of rhetoric? Or is rhetoric a crime in Donne and Dryden too? Again, the charge of 'insincerity' can surely be dismissed. Insincerity can only be a failure of sincerity, and neither quality is proper to poetry. Where is the sincerity in King Lear? Yeats had lived and written long enough to know that true poetry is a form of projection even when it is most 'personal'. The poet as a person vanishes into what he sees and

feels. In such poems as 'Leda', 'The Irish Airman', 'All Souls' Night', this process is perfectly achieved. Where Yeats' poetry is unsuccessful, it is a failure of incantation and not insincerity which is the trouble. This is especially the case with his love poetry. His women, from Countess Cathleen to Crazy Jane, are a most unconvincing lot. They lack poetic body or reality. It seems as if Yeats could never see a woman for what she was. If she approximated to his ideal at all she had somehow to be evaporated into it. His self-imposed task as a poetic lover was the only one in which he failed. Mr. Henn would not agree, and certainly his chapter on woman old and young traces an illuminating sequence.

It is well to be reminded of the complex virtues of *Last Poems* even if one cannot agree with Mr. Henn's estimate of the 'randy' ballads. We are over-rich in the poetry of adolescence. The genuine poetry of old age is another thing. The loneliness of Yeats' example must deter valuation.

Perhaps the chief virtue of the present book is in its constant reminders of the range and value of Yeats' thought, quite independently of the poetry. For how many other poets can this be said? Even the reader who feels he knows it well enough may be usefully reminded of the wisdom, complexity and beauty of Yeats' prose.

## New Novels

**The Plenipotentiaries.** By H. J. Kaplan. Secker and Warburg. 10s. 6d.

**The Consul at Sunset.** By Gerald Hanley. Collins. 9s. 6d.

**Randall and the River of Time.** By C. S. Forester. Michael Joseph. 10s. 6d.

**Three Novels.** By Ronald Firbank. Duckworth. 18s.

**C**ONCERN, an honest and well-meant concern with the universal problems of the moment, seems to be the worst enemy of the serious novelist today. I am not suggesting that he should get rid of it. But might he not as well leave it alone—leave it, that is, to express itself indirectly? Otherwise he is apt to fall into the error of assuming, as Mr. Kaplan says, that 'since we are living in lugubrious times, significant writers must reflect their times and be as lugubrious as possible'. Mr. Kaplan is so careful to avoid the trap that he falls backwards into others, and his own novel is not free of forced significance of a kind. 'The Plenipotentiaries' are Americans abroad—to be precise, in Paris. To what extent they are endowed with full powers I cannot see, since they are also compelled, by the author's up-to-the-minute taste in definitions, to be Outsiders. They are Outsiders in America as well as Europe, bewildered with the heady freedom of being citizens of nowhere. The chief emissaries are Tony, whose beauty is 'so excessive as to constitute a mystery', and his fiancée, the prudent, practical, politically alert Patricia. Fresh from a young and innocent world, they meet and are initiated by the representatives of an old and inscrutable one, Pierre Tarski the painter and his wife. The initiation involves a temporary change of partners.

All this may sound more than a little merriment. It is impossible to believe in such an abstraction of young American womanhood as Pat, and as for the lovely Tony, whom at least one of the other characters would like to gobble up, I found him quite inedible. But the author's sense of surroundings, his rendering of the feel of daily living, makes up for a good deal. There seems to be a wide gap between his invention and his observation. As an observer at a political meeting, at a party in Montmartre, he is acute and amusing. As an inventor he is quite ready to try to get away with anything. His narrator, an elderly male cat, a gossip-writer, is used as a stalking-horse, and then dropped whenever he gets in the way. Mr. Kaplan is too intent on being *au fait* with the latest thing in French tailor-made ideas, and his style involves the use of such words as 'envision', 'inconscient' and 'imbalance'. Altogether *The Plenipotentiaries* may be too bright and rather silly. But it has the merit of being amusing even where the author scarcely intends it. And it is so much better to find intelligence misapplied than to find none at all.

*The Consul at Sunset* forces its significances

in deadly earnest. It is concerned with the white man's burden, not as it weighs, but as it tends to fall off, making for rueful or even tragic comedy in the process. It is set in the African desert, whose peoples like their British rulers even less than their Italian predecessors. At a lonely outpost two tribes come to battle over their rights to some water-holes whose use has been summarily redistributed by the British. This in turn leads to conflict between the political officer and the military officer in charge as to how to handle the situation. Love and murder complicate matters. The two officers go down in a welter of muddled principles and passions, as much out of control as the situation. It is set right by a senior officer from headquarters, more from cunning and experience than from his die-hard principles.

The moral ironies of the story are nicely distributed. One can guess how a Maugham or a Conrad would have handled them. Mr. Hanley is fully aware of them too, but he will not let well alone. The technique he employs, like that of so many novels today, is a serious application of the kind of advertising dialogue in which what Mr. X says emerges from his mouth in a balloon, while what he *thinks* rises in a steam of words over his head. The thought-streams of the principal officers are broad and turgid. They have brains 'choked with the sicknesses and agonies of a breaking world . . . worried about the minorities in Czechoslovakia, the peoples of India, the Indians in Africa, the Jews in Germany—'. If Mr. Hanley had left the implications to the reader his novel would be only one-third as long, but it would be an excellent story. With the Africans themselves—perhaps because they cannot have thought-streams—he is unfailingly shrewd and authentic.

The title of Mr. Forester's new novel is sufficient indication of what significances are to be underlined. In an appended comment he tells us that 'during the last fifty years the life of the average individual has become more complex than that of his ancestors. His environment has become more complex, and it has been more subject to violent changes'. About the violence one must agree, but as to complexity—surely the fact is that the issues have become more and more terrifyingly simple? The present novel, for half its course, deals with the first world war, a war which brought the same fate to millions of men—and it is not a complex novel. It touches the average, *par excellence*, of what the straightforward realist novel is expected to be today in a thousand circulating libraries. Style in a novel

of this kind would be as much out of place as wit in Parliament. Mr. Forester's hero is an 'average individual', endowed with nothing beyond the average but a flair for mechanical invention. He serves through the war, marries, and is led by a trick of fate to face a charge of manslaughter, and is acquitted. The author uses no contrived suspense, no tricks of narrative. A novel could not be more nearly without art. Conversation is reduced to an average of probabilities, and nothing is spared, not even the taxi-driver's thank you and the grinding of brakes as he drives away. The whole novel, like the character's thought, moves with the regularity of clockwork. Mr. Forester is extraordinarily painstaking, and faithful—to what? To the average. And the average, being an abstract, cannot be alive.

One of the invisible essentials of the novelist is wit. Nothing else can teach him what to leave out. Firbank had wit in overplus. It not only accounts for the omissions, it appears and reappears on the page. He quietly dispensed with all that the average novelist considers most necessary, and left himself with nothing but the essentials. To emerge so nearly nude must suggest either the scandalous or the classic, according to circumstances. After being an unobtrusive but decided scandal for a generation, Firbank can now be accepted as a classic with the same qualifications. The practising novelist can learn more from him about the technic and economy of the art than from any other writer of the century, and he can learn it in safety, because the example is inimitable.

As for the content, is that exemplary? Did Firbank have his finger on the pulse of his time? Did he hold anything but a distorting mirror up to it? The answer to all three questions is no. He was mislaid in his time. He would have had a talent for being mislaid in any period, and yet he could have made a dazzling contemporary for Congreve and Pope. *Caprice* (the last of the trio now republished, bound in yellow and violet) is as taut and trim, as consummately trained to its purpose as the *Rape of the Lock*, and as certain (outside the classroom) of immortality. But immortality evokes a dusty vista of shelves. With the passing of years, Firbank has gained rather than lost in immediacy. He may shortly be an answer to the pressing question of what reading to take with you in a flying saucer. And the insects that populate Mars—now that we know they are insects—may they learn one day to study and admire him.

DAVID PAUL

# CRITIC ON THE HEARTH

Comments on B.B.C. programmes by independent critics

## TELEVISION

### The 'Pimpernel' Returns

FIRST PRODUCED for television nearly a year ago, 'The Scarlet Pimpernel' came back to our screens on two recent evenings as graceful and gallant as a yacht not yet launched. Harold Hobson (who is ill; hence this trespass), writing about it as THE LISTENER television drama critic, said of the original presentation that 'it was larger than life', and the whole affair was indeed bursting not only with charming nonsense but with a relish for existence that is rare now in the theatre and, some would say, much diminished outside it.

One knew the story, disdained its fairy-tale elements, never completely succumbed to the spell of 'that demn'd elusive Pimpernel', and was prepared to witness rather than to enjoy a television version of it. This mood of patronage had to make way for one of appreciation. 'The Scarlet Pimpernel' turned out to be one of television's good things, producing its own afterglow of satisfaction, though it might not be flattering to trace this genial emotion to its true cause. The production was full of spirit and resource and excellently contrived for its medium, the physical limitations of which were almost comically underlined early on by the funny little Punch-and-Judy bench at which the party sat in the inn at Dover. Generally, the

producer cleverly avoided even so slight a hint of the problems besetting him.

At this point it might be fair to stress that new viewers should try to understand what these problems are or, at least, to concede that they exist. The head of television drama, Val Gielgud, wrote something about them two weeks ago in the *Radio Times*: 'For all its records of surprising achievement, Television Drama is



James Carney as Sir Percy Blakeney, Margaretta Scott as Lady Blakeney, and John Witty as Sir Andrew Ffoulkes in 'The Scarlet Pimpernel' televised on January 14



Picenelli in the television cabaret 'Café Continental' on January 13

still very much in the pioneering, the embryonic, stage. In the circumstances it cannot be otherwise. The business of Television Drama is highly technical; immensely complicated; and, at any rate when compared with the broadcasting of plays in sound only, very costly. And it has been compelled to develop to its present stage with facilities, technical, physical, and financial, extremely limited'.

With this reminder, one can offer a more sincere praise-be to the producer of 'The Scarlet Pimpernel', Fred O'Donovan, to the designer of the sets, James Bould, and to a cast which so resolutely enacted it. Margaretta Scott's vivacious Lady Blakeney would have stirred the imagination of Gainsborough. James Carney's Sir Percy ditto was not all lace and giggles; he left us only now and then in doubt of his reserves of will and wits. Terence de Marney's profile did what was required of it to convince us of the mischief of Chauvelin, and Jack Livesey was a jauntily dignified H.R.H. The other ladies and gentlemen behaved scrupulously as such, except where the book demanded otherwise. They could not have done better had they been rejuvenated by the large vote of approval given them by viewers after their first performance.

'David Garrick', last Sunday evening, brought

taken as a hint of the quality of this play.

Deserting the drama for other forms of entertainment, our exclusive concern here this week, there is relief as well as pleasure in being able to say friendly words about the latest in the 'How Do You View?' series in which Terry-Thomas was to climb to the dizzy heights of television success. Until last week he seemed to have become stuck half-way, owing, so far as one could judge at a distance, to lack of support from the script. There has been a decided improvement, though at the expense of that bright comedienne Avril Angers, who, mysteriously, was required last week to be entertaining in monosyllables only. Terry-Thomas being interviewed as the Tarzan who strikes the curtain-raising gong in the J. Arthur Rank films was extremely funny. He supplied viewers with more separate and distinct laughs than we have had for some time. Leslie Mitchell, not batting an eyelid as the interviewer, put a fine polish on this capital bit of fun.

The antics of Mr. Pastry continue to amuse while leaving us wondering whether they at all amuse Richard Hearne (appearing by permission of someone or other). In the successive knock-about catastrophes in which he is involved these Sunday evenings there is often a suggestion of surrender rather than of splendid participation,



Barbara Couper as Constantia Pinner ('Con') and Angela Baddeley as Josephine Pinner ('Jug') in 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel', televised on January 16

as if he would prefer (without the permission of someone or other) to be left to fabricate his own more subtle humour. Touches of it can be picked out of the grand *mélée* if one looks and listens keenly enough. If one may make so bold, that is the way to enjoy this programme.

Like the ballet, cabaret can be made to fit very neatly into the television screen and this was demonstrated again by 'The Top Hat' show last Saturday night. The dancing girls were both pretty and graceful. Arthur English, using the back of his enormous necktie as the script, was not always intelligible and yet kept us sure that he was funny. Line Renaud, talking our language in the daintiest of broken accents, renewed our affection for her own. This charming French cabaret star gave distinction to a programme which might otherwise just have missed it.

REGINALD POUND

## BROADCAST DRAMA

### Now It Can Be Told

'So now I suppose the Dales will go on for ever', said the woman in the train. 'Yes', said her companion, 'I suppose they will—now'. And with a gleam in the eye which seemed to me less than kind, she added: 'But sooner or later they'll have to get older, too'. And all of us in the carriage fell to thinking of Mrs. Dale's deathbed, a senile Mrs. Freeman, and a toothless Gwen. And for a moment we looked rather frantically down the vista of the years.

I don't know how people inside the B.B.C., happy or disgruntled, are taking last week's big news. An outsider like myself can only echo Sir James Barrie's Wendy: 'Of course, it's awfully fas-cinating'. One thing seems blindingly clear: everyone 'on the whole', 'up to a point', 'to a certain extent' (good English phrases all) likes plays better than anything else. The chart which divides the nation like all Gaul into three lumps, elementaries, secondaries and stuck-ups, felt no doubt of it. We may differ about cinema organs or chamber music but oh! how we do all agree about radio drama. I hope the department thus vindicated is wreathed in smiles. It is nice to be loved and, although the idea is scouted in the best circles, the base truth is that we all flourish on compliments: flourish and improve.

But I do not want to spoil things, so we will leave the question of improvements out of it this week. Let us rather fall a-musing on ideal and un-ideal listening units as reflected in that audience research chart. There is for instance, imagination tells me, the ex-cruiserweight (elementary) who married a headmistress. Their offspring however by the law of averages (is it?) is only middlebrow, secondary or Home Service. What does the family listen to? Imagine the dismay of Mum when Dad puts on 'The Chapel in the Valley' or the son's fury when Mum's harpsichord recital interferes with his dramatised Thomas Hardy. And then, what of the couple who have scrimped all their lives to send their daughter to Cambridge? Are they allowed to spend the evening of their lives listening happily to pierhead jokes from the Midlands? Not a bit of it. Daughter, out of term, torments them nightly with steepest Strindberg. No wonder we all come together for Saturday-Night Theatre, for Mrs. Dale, for 'Curtain Up' and such. But can this perhaps be after all largely a result of that compromise for which as a nation we are so notoriously gifted? Can it possibly be that one in each group would rather be listening to something else but, for the sake of what used to be called Peace and Quiet before Marconi was born, quietly gives in to majority opinion? And if so, is this reflected in the

sampling by which the B.B.C. gains its knowledge of What People Like?

Every five years we have 'Strife', a play with solid and enduring theatrical merits which also tells us much about Galsworthy. True, it is out of date now; the boot is on the other foot; and one begs leave to think that the picture of Labour was in any case always a thoroughly sentimental one. But the revival had some good points. Very well worth a revival also was that classic among theatrical twosomes, 'Monsieur Lamberthier'. When Marius Goring and Lucie Mannheim, with Frank Hauser producing, first brought this up I had kind things to say of it which I wouldn't think of withdrawing or indeed adding to: the rule is, new notices for new productions, or who shall 'scape whipping?

Among novelties I have enjoyed two personal statements, fancy and plain. The fancy piece was all about Herbert Read's reactions to moving back to Yorkshire—done with imagination and nicely produced—back to quite another kind of Dales, in fact. The other was Ruth Gipps' 'Concert Pianist'—illustrated progress from infant prodigy to the gal who rattles off Rachmaninov while the crowd coughs its adoration; well acted by Mary Wimbush, plain, sane, and like some other historical biographies, admirably exploiting the fact that its illustrations meant something—unlike, for instance, a biography of a painter.

PHILIP HOPE-WALLACE

## THE SPOKEN WORD

### Gifts of the Gab

'THERE'S TALK!' I said, and me with the brogue in my voice I was after catching from the chat bottled in Dublin and uncorked on the Third Programme. The talkers were masters of the art, Oliver St. John Gogarty and Brinsley Macnamara, and the talk was unrehearsed and unscripted. No doubt the two of them knew they were going to be recorded, but there was no doubt, either, that from the moment they pushed out they were borne away on a tide of talk far beyond awareness of any mechanical contraption. To a tongue-tied Englishman this rich, spicy, uninhibited flow of language, a flow which stopped only because the B.B.C. faded it out, was immensely stimulating, and immensely tantalising too, because it was accompanied, on my set, by a ground bass of other B.B.C. activities which, added to the slight handicap of Irish eloquence to an English ear, required of the poor swine of a listener an agonised concentration which failed to catch some of the pearls which fell so liberally from the lips of the talkers. It involved, in fact, all the rapt discomfort of listening at a keyhole, an illusion which in the circumstances was not inappropriate, however harassing.

This was far and away the best pure conversation I ever heard on the air—and by 'pure' I mean conversation which was not a discussion, not an attempt to arrive at conclusions. True, they were 'letting on', as they say over there, to discuss a play one of them was contemplating about 'The Wildes of Merrion Square', but that, I venture to suspect, was no more than an artfully chosen precipitant to set the process going. The play was as shadowy at the end as at the beginning: no scheme resulted: it was simply, from start to finish, unfailingly brilliant talk that scattered by the way flashes of Irish history, sparks of criticism, and a dazzling array of character-sketches—Sir William Wilde, eminent surgeon, archaeologist, industriously philoprogenitive; Lady Wilde, not to be sniffed at as a poet; Oscar with his weakness for admiration and applause and his glittering epigrams (we were reminded of a few of his best), his brother Willie, and, towering behind them all,

the formidable and Reverend John Mahaffy. Yes, great talk!

Another conversational duet, 'A Challenge Faced', was a very different kettle of fish. Here was no glorious irresponsibility, no talk for the mere sake of talking, but a carefully prepared discussion intended as a corrective to Fred Hawley's 'The Nature of the Universe' and Professor J. Z. Young's Reith Lectures. The talkers were C. A. Coulson, F.R.S., professor of Theoretical Physics at London University, and Canon I. T. Ramsey, Lecturer in the Philosophy of Religion at Cambridge. Both of them are Christians, but their argument did not become specifically Christian until near its end. For the rest, their chief object was to controvert Mr. Hoyle's assertion in his final lecture that 'science is left with full possession of the physical world, while religion occupies some other world whose nature I can't even begin to imagine'. That astonishing bit of dogmatism can have rejoiced only the simplest minds, but the relation between religion and science worries and confuses many intelligent people nowadays and it is good to have it as cogently and clearly discussed as it was by these two speakers.

My last specimen of talk is a solo brilliantly performed by Patrick Heron. Under the title 'The Changing Jug', he analysed with quite extraordinary acuteness the pictorial treatment of familiar objects (Braque's jug was the typical example) by the painters Braque, Picasso and Matisse. For me the talk threw a revealing light on the work of all of them, more especially the first two.

I see, on looking back through my *Radio Times*, that all three of these programmes occurred on the same evening. You would hardly do better at a Lord Mayor's Banquet.

MARTIN ARMSTRONG

## BROADCAST MUSIC

### Verdi's 'Don Carlos'

'DON CARLOS', which was bravely revived last week by the Sadler's Wells Opera in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Verdi's death, presents formidable problems to the modern producer. For one thing, there is so much of it. The Paris Opera, for which it was composed, insisted on five acts, including a lengthy ballet. Then Verdi later shortened it by one act for production at Milan, making the action thereby somewhat obscure. Yet a later version—that which is published—restored the first act, retaining the other alterations made in the Milanese production. For a revival under present conditions some omissions and rearrangement are really necessary. Even so, the new version by Norman Tucker, based on Sumner Austin's pre-war translation, occupied nearly three hours, without counting the intervals.

Mr. Tucker has retained as much of the original first act as is necessary to make the unhappy situation of Carlos and Elizabeth clear to the audience. This also serves to introduce a ray of light and happiness into an otherwise consistently sombre score. This oppressive air of gloom has prevented the opera from attaining general popularity, but it should not prevent the sensitive listener from perceiving that it contains some of Verdi's most substantial characters drawn in the round and presented in music of extraordinary richness and beauty.

One is so grateful for this opportunity of hearing again the scenes between the King and Posa, between Carlos and Posa in the prison, and between the King and the Grand Inquisitor, that it seems curmudgeonly to raise a critical voice about some of Mr. Tucker's rearrangements. But it must be said that the transference of the Grand Inquisitor's scene to the prison not only makes dramatic nonsense, but also deprives

the Inquisitor's intervention with the rebels of its proper effect. The Inquisition is the true antagonist to all that the liberal Carlos and Posa stand for, and to huddle its representative away into the penultimate scene of the opera (especially as, for practical reasons, we are deprived of the *auto-da-fé*) is to obscure the true springs of the dramatic action. Moreover, the music of this scene, one of the most imaginative in all opera, surely calls for an intimate setting, even as it is a mistake to make Philip accuse his wife *coram populo*. These two scenes come in the score after Philip's great air 'Ella giammai m'amo', and there seems no reason why they

should not be replaced where they belong. On the other hand, Mr. Tucker is to be commended for restoring Schiller's tragic ending. Of the excellent performance, in which Mr. Sharp's Posa, Mr. Clarkson's King Philip and Miss Shuard's Eboli were outstanding, I propose to write in more detail after the second broadcast next week.

Igor Markevitch's handling of 'The Rite of Spring' was admirably clear and accurate, but, I thought, something lacking in rhythmical urgency. All those odd, jagged metres were carefully measured, but did not flow into a continuity. Still it was good to hear this historic

score so well presented by the Philharmonia Orchestra. Stravinsky's other work, 'Persephone', represents his 'classic' period, in which he went in for the monumental. Its lucid texture and clean lines, which (like Picasso's no less monumental drawing on the cover of the score) are reduced to the minimum necessary to indicate the idea, produce an effect of blank beauty. It should have been done in French, for Stravinsky uses the very vowel sounds as part of his colouring, and the subtle rhymes and assonances of Gide's text are quite impossible to render in English.

DYNELEY HUSSEY

## Verdi after Fifty Years

By FRANK WALKER

**A**T five o'clock in the morning of January 30, 1901, vast, silent crowds began to converge in the centre of Milan, where, in the Hotel di Milano, Verdi lay dead. According to instructions left in his will, his funeral was to be unostentatious, without elaborate ceremony or music, and was to take place at dawn. But nothing could prevent the Italian people from paying homage to the man who had, as D'Annunzio said in his memorial ode, loved and wept for them all in his music. Verdi's wishes having been respected at this first ceremony, the re-burial, a month later, in the oratory of the Home for Aged Musicians, which he had himself founded and financed, became the occasion of an extraordinary demonstration of national pride, love and sorrow.

No other composer has ever meant so much to his countrymen. As the procession left the cemetery there was heard again, from hundreds of singers under Toscanini's direction, the great chorus from 'Nabucco', 'Va pensiero sull'aldorato', which, nearly sixty years before, had first proclaimed Verdi's genius and given expression to the longings of an oppressed people. He had been the Bard of the *Risorgimento*, and had his place beside Mazzini, Garibaldi and Cavour, among the apostles of the new Italy.

Truly, he was the last of the giants—a great patriot, a great composer, and a great man. His reputation in his own country has never known eclipse; he has sailed triumphantly through the trough that follows the great wave of fame. Abroad, although he always had a popular following, and although the first performances of his late works were world-events, it was many years before his full stature was recognised. The Germans began to re-discover Verdi in the 'twenties, largely through the activities of Franz Werfel, with his selection of letters, his novel, and his new German versions of 'La Forza del Destino' and 'Simon Boccanegra'. During the 1927-28 season there were 1,513 performances of Verdi operas in Germany. This country followed a little later. No adequate study in English of Verdi's life or music appeared until nearly thirty years after his death; Ferruccio Bonavia, with his radiant sketch of 1930, was the first to make use of the *Copialettere*, the composer's letter-files, which had been available in print since 1913. Francis Toye's admirable *Life and Works* followed in 1931 and Toye's preface is a historical document of importance in the history of Verdi appreciation in this country. That what he wrote there was not the exaggeration of an enthusiast is shown by a passage from Richard Capell's booklet on *Opera*, in Benn's Sixpenny Library of 1930:

The greatest of modern Italian composers has been less than fairly treated in English criticism;

indeed, the treatment he gets in such a work as Parry's *Art of Music* amounts to no consideration at all. Stanford was an exception; and his appreciation of the great masterpieces of Verdi's last period has had a certain influence upon English opinion. But not even *Otello* and *Falstaff* availed to give Verdi a place in the Oxford University Press's *Heritage of Music*—a compilation that included such lesser lights as Glinka and Franck. Parry dismissed Verdi, or at least the earlier Verdi, as a mere writer of popular tunes.

Mr. Capell himself has splendid pages on Verdi. Centenaries and anniversaries provide occasion for reassessments and the performance of unfamiliar works. The Italians, who do this sort of thing very well, propose to broadcast performances of all Verdi's operas during the course of 1951—the *Anno Verdiano*. It is to be hoped that all the less well-known works will be made available to the B.B.C. It is unlikely that, as a result, there will be any pronounced shift of emphasis in our appreciation; 'Rigoletto', 'Il Trovatore', 'La Traviata', 'Aida', the Requiem, 'Otello' and 'Falstaff' represent Verdi faithfully enough. Here his genius burned at its brightest. The flames are more intermittent and smokier, in 'Un Ballo in Maschera', 'La Forza del Destino', 'Don Carlos' and the revised 'Simon Boccanegra'. These are the 'interesting', transitional works, full of wonderful music that, for one reason or another, fails to coalesce into a unified, wholly convincing work of art. 'Ballo' and 'Forza' are not really unfamiliar, and thanks to Sadler's Wells we have had opportunities recently of seeing the other two, much rarer, works on the stage—'Don Carlos' in somewhat dubious form, it is true.

But there are numerous other operas, from much earlier periods, which must be known, if we are to see Verdi whole. A revival of 'Oberto, Conte di San Bonifacio' or 'Un giorno di regno' could only have historical interest; a performance of 'Nabucco', however, with its Biblical grandeur and splendid choral scenes, would be worth going a long way to hear. Ideally, it ought to be considered in relation to Rossini's 'Mosè', which was performed at Milan twenty-two times in 1840, and influenced Verdi profoundly. 'I Lombardi' and 'Ernani', which followed 'Nabucco' in successive years—did ever musician score three such triumphs, one after the other?—represent the young composer in his most forceful and vehement vein, his passionate sincerity burning up crudities and absurdities. 'I due Foscari', of 1844, has more humanity, if less fire, and is a generally underestimated work. It is accused of excessive gloom, and consequent monotony, but, as the composer himself said of another of his operas, 'it is sad because it must be sad'. The *terzetto* in the second act is the first of those sublime lamenta-

tions to which the idea of tears and human misery inspired Verdi. *Pianto, piangere*—his all-embracing, God-like compassion translated these words into music that falls like balm on the ear, infinitely sad, yet soothing and consoling, and without a trace of sentimentality. A marvellous anthology of tears in music could be compiled from his works.

'Giovanna d'Arco', 'I Masnadieri' and 'Il Corsaro' belong to the fretful and tormented 'years in the galleys'. Their revival would be a curious but probably painful experience. At times it would be hard not to laugh. 'Macbeth' is an exceptional work, an early experiment in music-drama, rising to great heights in the sleep-walking scene, which is, incidentally, not a product of the revision of 1865, as sometimes assumed. The patriotic note, which recurs in these early operas, found its ultimate expression in 'La Battaglia di Legnano'. When the Milanese rising of 1848 took place Verdi was in Paris. He rushed back and, as a recently published letter shows, became one of the Republican Tribunes during the brief period before the Austrians restored the *status quo*. At that time he wrote that he had no thought of composing: 'I would not write a note for all the gold in the world: I should feel immense remorse at using up music-paper, which is so good to make cartridges with'. But a little later he produced in 'La Battaglia di Legnano' a real revolutionary hymn.

Perhaps, of all Verdi's neglected operas, 'Luisa Miller', of 1849, most deserves revival. It is unequal, with some conventional pages, and the earlier parts show the influence of the Donizettian *opera semi-seria*. But the last act, with its intimacy, delicacy and pathos, seems to anticipate, and bears comparison with, the last act of 'La Traviata'.

We need to know more of Verdi's music, and we need, too, to know more about Verdi the man. The closer his life and character are investigated, the greater admiration he excites. Anniversary celebrations leave permanent memorials in the literature they stimulate. 1913 (the centenary year) saw the publication of the *Copialettere*; 1931 (thirty years after the composer's death) produced Gatti's huge biography and other volumes; 1941, officially celebrated all over Italy, gave us an imposing array of books and important articles. For 1951 we are promised an enlarged edition of Gatti and another volume of three hundred unpublished letters, mostly to Piave, is also in preparation. It would be a fitting climax to the *Anno Verdiano* if we could have the complete correspondence with the house of Ricordi, extending possibly to a thousand letters. 1951 would then indeed be a memorable Verdian year.

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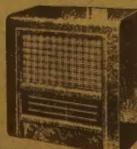
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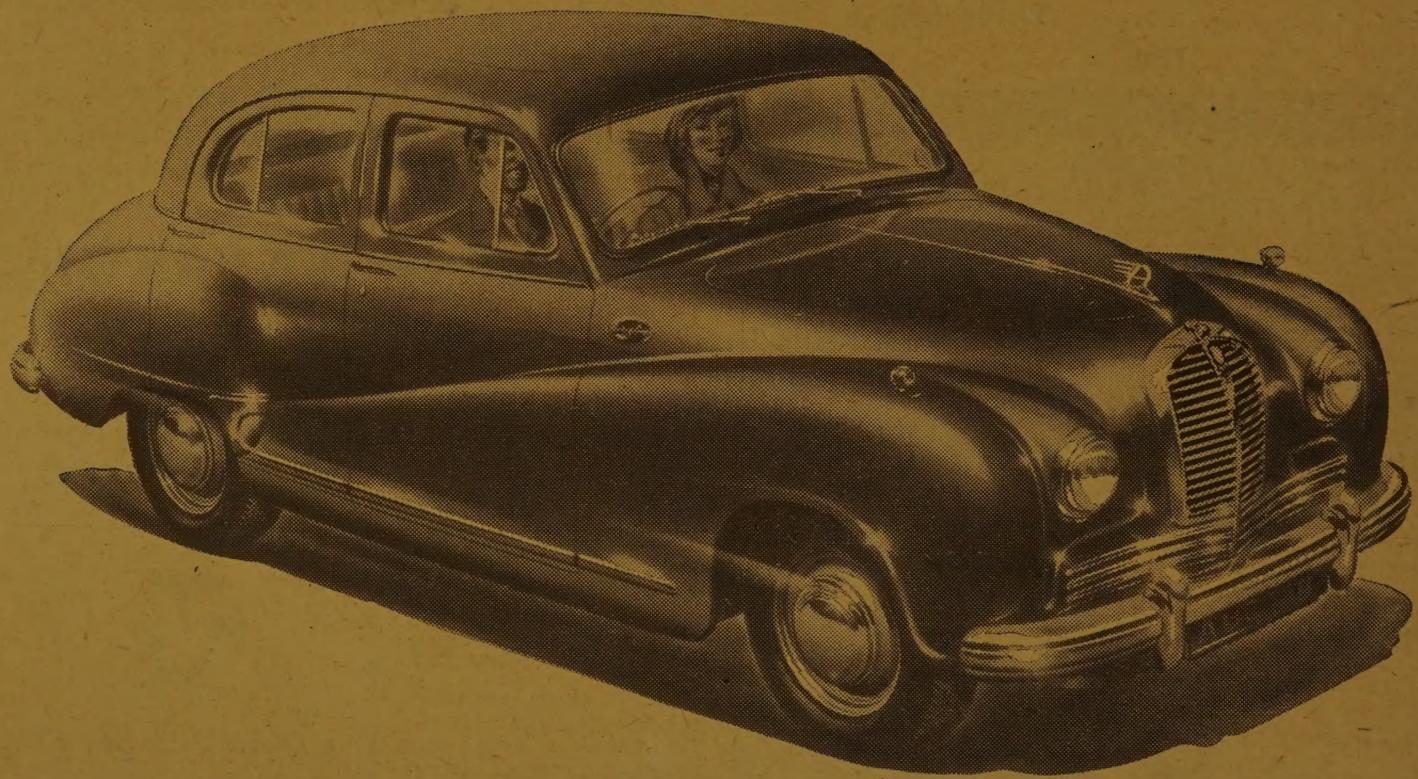


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## Advice for the Housewife

### SHORT CUT TO CLEANING SILVER

THE SHORT CUT to cleaning silver is a drying-up cloth which polishes as it dries. Here is the recipe for making one.

You want a piece of Turkish towelling—the size you find comfortable to work with: my cloth is a yard long and half a yard wide. Soak it in a solution made with:

- 2 level teaspoons of plate powder
- 2 tablespoons of household ammonia
- 2 teacups of warm water

Stir this into a thin, smooth, pink milk. And then put the towelling into the basin and slap it round so that it absorbs all the solution—and absorbs it as evenly as possible. Ideally you want to finish with a dry basin and a sopping wet cloth. Hang this up to dry—outside or over a basin because it may drip a bit to begin with.

In future, wash the silver in the ordinary way, with hot soapy water, and rub it dry on your pink cloth. It comes up clean and shining, with surprisingly little effort.

RUTH DREW

### FRESH MINCED MEAT

I particularly recommend this dish to people who live alone and have little facilities for roasting pieces of meat, or perhaps want to entertain several people on a solitary ration of meat. Here are the ingredients for 3-4 people:

- 3 lb. of minced meat (I like beef best)
- 1 egg yolk
- 2 small cooked potatoes
- 1 small pickled beetroot
- 1 tablespoon of grated onion
- 1 dessertspoon of capers
- seasoning

The beetroot is an ordinary-cooked one soaked in vinegar for several hours. Mix all the ingredients thoroughly in basin. If you cannot spare an egg, stir in 1 tablespoon of cream from

the top of the milk instead. Form the mixture into small balls: this is easy if you mould it with two small spoons dipped in cold water. Heat quite a big knob of margarine in a frying-pan, then fry the balls slowly until they are a pleasant brown colour. When they are ready pile them on to a hot dish.

For a sauce, thicken the fat left in the pan with 1 dessertspoon of flour. Cook this for a couple of minutes, then take the pan off the heat and blend in a teacup of milk—leaving as much cream with this as possible. Let this sauce thicken, stirring well so that it keeps smooth, and season it.

Garnish your dish with parsley and serve with mashed or fried potatoes and a green vegetable or cooked celery or chicory. Chicory is in season now, and cheaper than it has been for some time.

MARGUERITE PATTEN

*mélange* into something within our reach and means. We cut out some items and put in more of some of the others, and this is how it worked out: rice, stock, kidneys, mushrooms, tomato, bacon, cheddar cheese, parmesan cheese and butter. Don't forget the parmesan; that really is the making of it. The rice is put into the boiling stock and left to cook very slowly, with the lid off the saucepan, until the rice is soft and the liquor has all boiled away. Salt and pepper it well. While it was boiling, the kidney, tomato, bacon and mushrooms should have been cut into very small pieces and fried in a little of the butter. The cheese should have been grated fine and mixed. When the rice is done, stir in all the other ingredients, see that the seasoning is right, and transfer it all to a pie-dish for slight browning in the oven.

ROY COLE

### RISOTTO

Risotto is that pleasant and satisfying Italian dish based on rice. For many years I made what we thought was a very good risotto; our friends always encouragingly passed their plates for more anyway, and this was how it was done. Some rice boiled in water with salt and pepper until soft; an onion chopped fine and fried in butter; some grated cheese: the onion and cheese well stirred into the rice, put into a pie-dish and browned in the oven.

One day, holidaying in France, we had the happy thought of buying a French cookery book. Their risotto is a sophisticated eye-opener if you like. To the rice is added a clear soup stock, white wine, kidney, game stuffing, chicken giblets, cocks combs, white chicken meat or veal, ham or bacon, mushrooms, a truffle, tomato purée, grated gruyere cheese, grated parmesan cheese, and butter.

I will tell you how we modified this luxurious

### Some of Our Contributors

H. V. HODSON (page 123): editor of *The Sunday Times*; Reforms Commissioner, Government of India, 1941-42; Director of the Empire Division, Ministry of Information, 1939-41; author of *Twentieth Century Empire*, etc.

KURT FRÖDERSTRÖM (page 125): correspondent of the Conservative Press Agency of Stockholm

Rt. Hon. VISCOUNT STANSGATE, D.S.O., D.F.C. (page 126): Secretary of State for Air, 1945-46; Secretary of State for India, 1929-31

Dr. MARGARET MILLER (page 131): has travelled in Russia and studied its economic system during the first and second Five Year Plans

Dr. H. G. SCHENK (page 137): Lecturer in European Economic and Social History at Oxford University; author of *The Aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars: the Concert of Europe—an Experiment*

### Crossword No. 1,082.

### Mixed Grill. By Altair

Prize (for the first five correct solutions opened): Book token, value 12s. 6d.

Closing date: First post on Thursday, February 1

#### CLUES—ACROSS

1. Enlist for a showy decoration (6).
5. Kind of inverted bowl up in a West African tree (6).
10. Heroine of pleasant play by G.B.S. (7).
11. 'Hungry — don't cackle w'en he find a wum' (Harris) (7).
12. Even a celestial umbrella would be no protection against these (15, two words).
13. Frateretto told Edgar, '—— is an angler in the lake of darkness' (4).
14. Ming State (anag.) (9).
16. Where Tommy can sample Ma's jams in peace? (9, hyphen).
18. Father of Categories and the categorical imperative (4).
22. Sir Gerald Kelly, for example (15, two words).
24. Strait restricted to one only of each of its letters in order, would make a famous perfume (7).
25. Epithet for a bird of prey alone in a territorial decoration (7).
26. Jolly boat breaking up in minor legislation (6, hyphen).
27. Has this pet been weaned? (6, hyphen).

#### DOWN

2. Little bag which is lighter in a shell (7).
3. This Coney Island is not near New York nor in Loch Neagh (5).
4. Strictly speaking perhaps there is no room for more than one of these in the newspaper van (15, two words).
5. Famous Sussex establishment not yet in the N.H.S. (15, two words).
6. A matter of form now often form itself! (8, two words).
7. A river of Hades on an anaesthetic (7).
8. 'Sumer is — in, Lhude sing cuccu!' (6).

9. It can give, so to speak, a flowery kiss (5).

15. Spenserian name assumed by Burns's pen friend (8).

17. Contraption of tar and 'turkentine' which refused to take its hat off to Brer Rabbit (7, hyphen).

19. Famous in song for his 'ice-cream cart' (7).

20. I'm in the trade for a violent outburst (6).

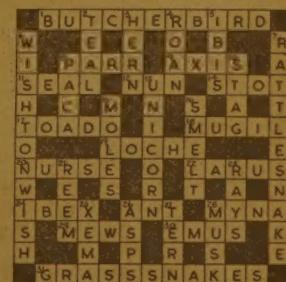
21. 'For then, despite of —, I would be brought From regions far'—(Shakespeare's Sonnets) (5).

23. Oxfordshire village in a Long Island resort (5).

### Solution of No. 1,080

#### Prizewinners:

- J. E. Duke (London, N.12); D. J. Frye (Worcester Park); I. Jones (Rugby); J. M. Rhoades (Chesham); A. R. Wheeler (Worcester).



THE CODE.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z  
Z Y X W V U T S R Q P O N M L K J I H G F E D C B A

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